Chronicles

October 2009

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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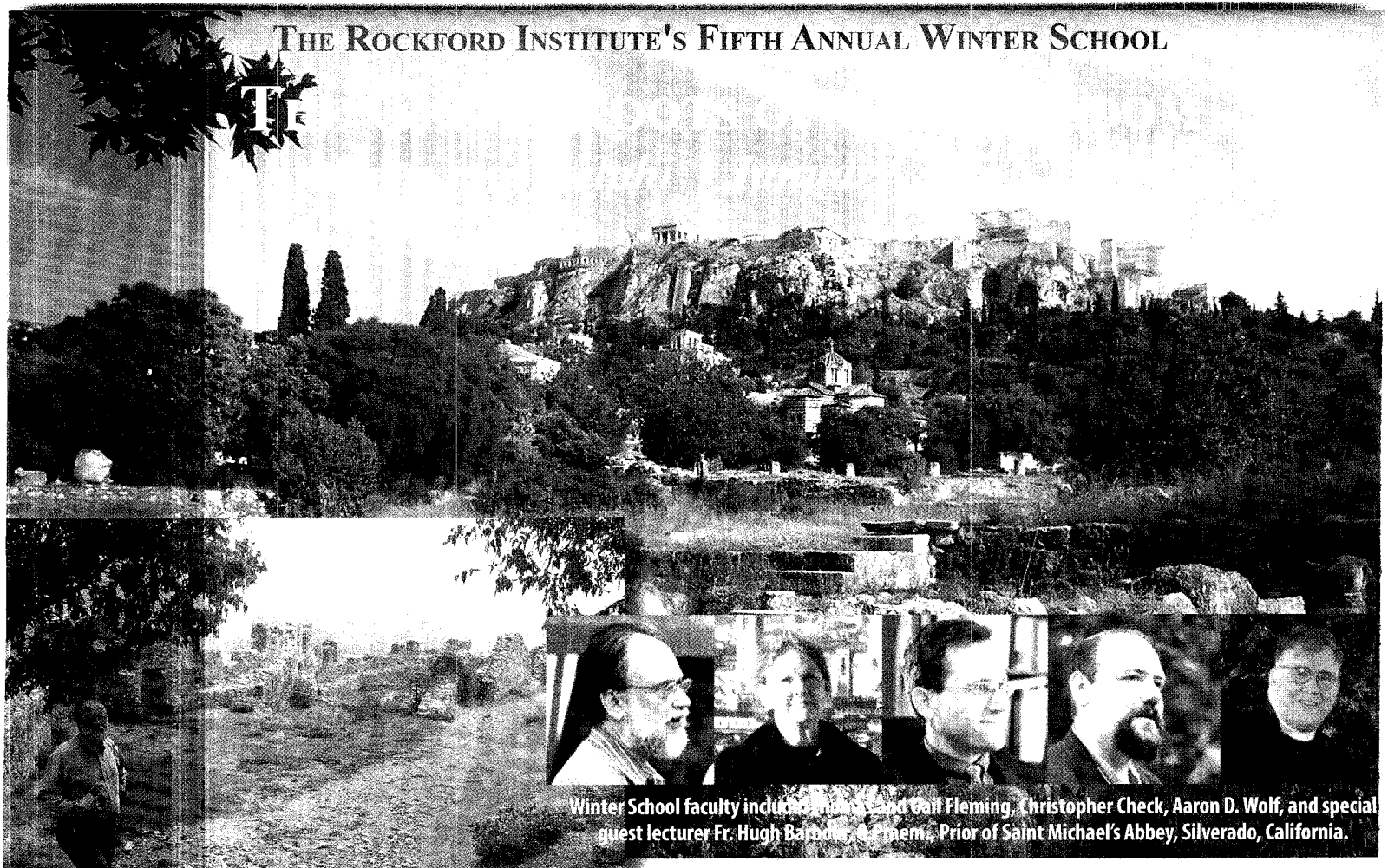

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- seven nights' (arrive Jan. 20; checkout on Jan. 27) lodging at the Acropolis Select Hotel (*www.acropoliselect.gr*), a fully renovated, three-star hotel within walking distance of the Acropolis;
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- selected entrance fees to museums;
- and a motor-coach excursion to Delphi.

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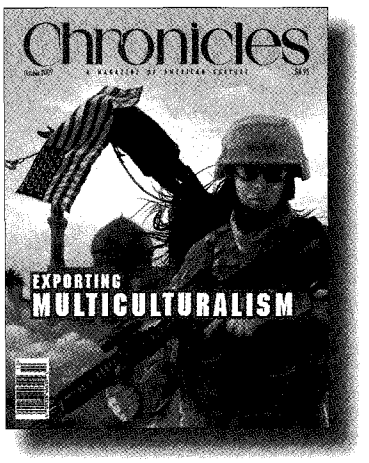

PERSPECTIVE

Remembering Who We Were 10
by Thomas Fleming

VIEWS

Exporting Political Correctness 14
by Justin Raimondo
Through force of arms.

Obama's Right-Wing Cheerleaders 17
by Leon Hadar
Rah-rah government intervention!

NEWS

Dissolving Britain 20
by Mary Ellen Synon
The Lisbon Treaty's Eurojustice.

REVIEWS

Supernova 24
by Derek Turner

Charlotte Mosley, ed.: *In Tearing Haste: Letters Between Deborah Devonshire and Patrick Leigh Fermor*

Matthew A. Roberts on Dora L. Costa's and Matthew E. Kahn's *Heroes and Cowards: The Social Face of War* ◈ **Catharine Savage Brosman** on Maurice Lever's *Beaumarchais: A Biography* ◈ **Francis Phillips** on Lucy Beckett's *A Postcard From the Volcano* ◈ 27

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter From Spain: Equality Takes a Beating 34
by Brooke Cadwallader

Letter From Greece: A Modern Greek Tragedy 37
by Nikos Hidiroglou

VITAL SIGNS

CHRISTIANITY: **The Necessity of Christianity** 39
by Tom Piatak

EDUCATION: **Campus Rebellion** 42
by Egon Richard Tausch

CONSERVATISM: **Substandard: The End of an Illusion** 44
by Thomas Fleming

COLUMNS

WESTERN STORIES 22
"Correcting a Legal Transgression"
by Paul Craig Roberts

UNDER THE BLACK FLAG 23
"Oiling Up the Wheels of Justice"
by Taki Theodoracopulos

LETTER TO THE BISHOP 31
"Adventurous"
by Joe Ecclesia

THE ROCKFORD FILES 32
"Coming Home"
by Scott P. Richert

EUROPEAN DIARY 38
"The Salami Fallacy"
by Andrei Navrozov

IN THE DARK 46
"Aliens and Knaves"
District 9
by George McCartney

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD 48
"The Democratic Religion"
by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

DEPARTMENTS

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES 4
AMERICAN PROSCENIUM 6
CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS 8

POETRY
Portobello Mushrooms and 12
Cheese by Catharine Savage Brosman 13

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Cover by George McCartney, Jr.
Inside illustrations by Melanie Anderson.

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Scott P. Richert

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LEGAL-AFFAIRS EDITOR
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Cindy Link

PUBLISHER
The Rockford Institute

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Editorial Phone: (815) 964-5054.
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Advertising E-mail: *RBurr@BurrMediaGroup.com*
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On Dressing Down

In her short piece "Men in Power" (*Vital Signs*, September) Nicole Kooistra describes a men's organization at the University of Chicago that grew out of a satirical article, and then proceeds to berate the organization for its pursuits (such as developing professional contacts and learning about prostate cancer), the appearance of its members ("perfectly groomed, cologne-scented, pink-shirted"), and its failure to teach men "how to be men." She would prefer that such an organization instruct its members in how to grill, throw a football, and wear flannel shirts.

I frankly find this a not only disturbing view of the purpose of attending university but a shockingly limited understanding of manhood (and its proper appearance) to be held by a contributor to *Chronicles*. The places for a man to learn how to be a man are in his father's home, and then within his community of extended family, neighbors, sports teams, *etc.*, where he can learn his responsibilities and how to meet them. Universities are where students go to gain knowledge both general and particular, and incidentally to gain a broader group of acquaintances and "contacts" that will help them along in life. Colleges and universities founded along particular religious (or otherwise) lines can certainly strengthen a young man's upbringing or disposition, but they cannot be accredited as academic institutions without at least pretending to teach him something. That American universities often fail even to instruct students in very basic subjects does not, however, make them responsible for other areas of the students' lives—such as supplying them with a come-lately formation of behavior. I agree with Miss Kooistra's lack of admiration for the student who wastes his free time at college joining an advocacy group, but I have nothing but scorn for the college-age man who would look to a campus organization to learn to shoot guns or pitch a tent or any of the things that his father or scout master should have taught him.

I must take Miss Kooistra to task in particular for her disapproval of men wearing Oxford shirts, pink or otherwise. There is no better ensemble for any grown man than some combination of a well-fitting button-down shirt, trousers, tie, and a jacket. And of course, a grown man should see that he is "perfectly groomed" before donning the aforementioned articles. This once very common manner of dressing for men is particularly well suited to the work of a student—that is, for attending classes and lectures—or for any meeting pertaining to a business career. Students, while on campus as such, are not called upon to chop wood, drive trucks, go fishing, or do any of the several things for which a flannel shirt might be in order. It is with pride that I describe to new acquaintances the dress tradition of my own alma mater, The University of the South, which students even in these degenerate times embrace of their own accord: jacket and tie (complete with an Oxford) for the gentlemen, skirts or dresses for the ladies. We who chose to attend The University of the South took the time voluntarily to dress carefully for class out of respect for the institution, for our professors, and for the work (including sometimes attending campus organization meetings) that we aimed to take seriously. I hesitate to suggest that these differences of opinion on sartorial decorum could be regional. I grew up in the Midwest myself, with exactly these same assumptions. There are many things to dislike, I am sure, about many men who wear pink Oxford shirts. But perhaps the habitual wearing of a well-fitted, becoming shirt should be regarded as a laudable effort at some degree of mature masculinity, rather than as a mark against their manliness. I have no doubt that Miss Kooistra will agree with me in thinking that men are capable of learning more than how to

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tackle or fish (such as Latin or chemistry or even "business"), for which they seek admittance to university, without abandoning their manhood. And so being, they should be capable of dressing more carefully than 12-year-old boys on a weekend camping trip.

—Eleanor Lacey
Athens, GA

Miss Kooistra Replies:

The main point of my article was not to "berate the organization for its pursuits," or to advise men on how to dress, but to point out that there is something seriously wrong in a nation whose young men feel compelled to form advocacy groups dedicated to "maleness" that are totally devoid of its defining features. Mrs. Lacey writes that she shares my "lack of admiration for the student who wastes his free time at college joining an advocacy group . . . " We seem, then, to be in fundamental agreement.

Mrs. Lacey does, however, charge me with expressing several views that would justify *Chronicles* in firing me instantly. She correctly notes that I would prefer an organization like Men in Power "instruct its members in how to grill, throw a football, and wear flannel shirts," and she finds this "a disturbing view" of "the purpose of attending universities." Had I said anything whatsoever about grilling, flannel, and football being the purpose of a university, I would accept her criticism entirely, as such a view would make me rather like the leftists who believe universities exist to make us more "tolerant" of "diversity." Universities should be places where students are taught to think and to appreciate the body of thought we have inherited, and I think Mrs. Lacey agrees with me entirely on that point.

What seems to have provoked her response was the view: "Still, it would have been better if Saltarelli's article were written in earnest—and if MiP followed the article's plan. Imagine a campus organization where guys actually learned how to do guy stuff—play tackle football, grill, shoot guns, pitch a tent, fish and hunt. . . . Such a group would have had practical benefits." Note my word choice—*better*. Not *best*. Like Mrs. Lacey, I believe that men should learn how to be men at home and in their extended communities. School is no place to learn the responsibilities inherent to one's sex. Unfortunately, as a result of a number of deficiencies that are routinely discussed in these pages, men often don't learn how to be men. So if these young bucks are going to go off to college and do something as effeminate as joining an advocacy group, I would rather those groups at least teach "guy stuff." MiP is not teaching men how to be men according to the Western tradition. It is essentially identical to any other pre-professional organization on campus, except for the fact that its membership is predominantly male, and, according to its website, it fosters "an intellectual approach to male problems." I wonder what kinds of "problems" these might be. How to support a wife and children in a collapsing economy? Maintaining spousal and fatherly authority in a world that derides both? Protecting one's family from harm in a society coming apart at the seams? If the men of an "advocacy group" aren't going to wrestle with such problems, then please, let them at least do something useful, such as learning how to put venison on the table. They can write résumés at an advising office, and making contacts is something done more on an informal basis ("Hey man, want to grab a beer after class?") than in a formal group setting. Mrs. Lacey believes that my preference for a group that grills demonstrates my "shockingly limited understanding of manhood." On the contrary. I simply prefer that men do male things if they are going to gather, rather than discuss—at 18-22 years old!—the importance of building a 401(k).

Mrs. Lacey also writes, "I must take Miss Kooistra to task in particular for her disapproval of men wearing Oxford shirts, pink or otherwise. There is no better ensemble for any grown man than some combination of a well-fitting button-down shirt, trousers, tie, and a jacket." I assume she objects to my statement, "No pink Oxford shirts allowed." Far be it from me not to appreciate a man wearing a suit and an Oxford. The point of that sentence was the color, not the cut, and even that was meant more as a humorous example than as a serious criticism. (I shudder to think of what my father would say if I were to bring home a man in pink, whether an Oxford or a polo.) Perfectly groomed, cologne-scented, pink-shirted guys can, I suppose, still be considered "manly," although, rarely being "perfectly groomed" myself, I would have a difficult time accepting a man who was. My comments, and my subsequent praise of my friend's fraternity instituting a "flannel day," were a criticism of what is known as the "metrosexual" and nothing more. Grown men should, of course, dress in a manner appropriate to their position in life.

From her closing comments, I believe Mrs. Lacey and I agree that the truly well-formed man would be capable of much more than flipping a steak with *panache* or shooting a clay pigeon in midair. Such a man would also be well educated—preferably knowing a little Latin and chemistry, as well as enough of history and politics to understand his own world—and also courteous to all, confident and dutiful in both his work and his home, and always dressed appropriately for whatever task he faces. He would understand Saint Paul's admonition, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it."

A group such as Men in Power teaches men only that there are too many women's-advocacy groups around. Their solution is to retreat into a corner and form their own, hardly a masculine way of confronting a problem. I shudder to think what such "men" will do should anything threaten the happiness and well-being of the women and children who will one day depend upon them.

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by William J. Quirk

Back From the Brink

On July 11 President Obama said that thanks to his "swift and aggressive action . . . we've been able to pull our financial system and our economy back from the brink." Six days later, Larry Summers repeated the analogy: "We were at the brink of catastrophe at the beginning of the year but we have walked some substantial distance back from the abyss." After the failure of Lehman Brothers, Ben Bernanke was asked, "Well, what if we don't do anything?" To which he replied, "There will be no economy on Monday." Former President George W. Bush told ABC News in December that, in September, Bernanke and Treasury Secretary Paulson "said to me that if we don't act boldly, Mr. President, we could be in a depression greater than the Great Depression." Chairman Bernanke, on July 26, told a Kansas City audience that he was "not going to be the Federal Reserve chairman who presided over the second Great Depression." When asked about bailing out the banks, Bernanke said, "nothing made me more frustrated, more angry, than having to intervene, particularly in a couple of cases where taking wild bets had forced these companies close to bankruptcy."

The basic Obama administration rationale—"Things may seem bad now, but they would be much worse without us"—doesn't sound like a strong line of defense. Things *are* bad: This year we have been losing around 500,000 jobs per month, and in July we lost 276,000, bringing the total since January 2008 to 6.7 million. Then, just as the White House began to talk incessantly about "green shoots," personal income for June showed the biggest drop in nearly five years. As the AP's Stephen Ohlemacher reports, "Tax receipts are on pace to drop 18 percent this year, the biggest single-year decline since the Great Depression . . . Individual income tax receipts are down 22 percent from a year ago. Corporate income taxes are down 57 percent."

Could things be worse? Always. But the administration never outlined in detail what they thought was going to happen. Doom, after all, could take many shapes, and if we were headed for something worse than the Great Depression, you would think they could have spelled out what was coming. The most you can say for the administration's argument is that it is unproved.

The financial crisis came along when there was very little real money available to deal with it in the conventional Keynesian manner, which is to throw money at it. The government has had to resort to funny money—$23 trillion according to the Office of the Special Inspector General for TARP. The main source of funny money is the Federal Reserve, which is supposed to be our independent central bank. After we've spent our $15 or $23 trillion, have we done anything more than bail out our five big banks?

The big banks buy and sell derivatives—bets—to each other in vast amounts. The comptroller of the currency reports that for the first quarter of 2009 JPMorgan Chase holds $81 trillion of derivatives while Goldman Sachs owns $40 trillion. Bloomberg News reports that 40 percent of bank profits come from derivatives. The banks are basically dealing with one another—they have created an exclusive Gamblers' Club.

Bernanke believed the market needed more liquidity and acted to provide lots of it. But, according to economist Anna Schwartz, liquidity is not the problem: "The real problem was that because of the mysterious new instruments that investors had acquired, no one knew which firms were solvent or what their assets were worth." Indeed, we still don't know. But the solution, if Schwartz is right, didn't require any money; it only required transparency and a little candor. The solution was to invite the five big banks to the Fed or Treasury and ask them to come clean about their derivative liabilities. (Something similar was done by the Fed in 1998 to pressure the creditor banks to save Long-Term Capital Management.) Then the banks could cancel some deals. Investors—and other banks—could see what bets had been made and who was solvent. The bankrupt banks would be shut. Our current period, the time of the walking dead, would be avoided. The only problem with Schwartz's approach is that it required full disclosure: Some or all of the banks would have had to admit they were bust.

Larry Summers, in early July, told the *Financial Times*:

> The president made two things clear to us early on. He would do what he had to to fix the banking system, to get the economy out of the rut in which he was inheriting it. But he had run for president to do long-run, fundamental things, like fixing healthcare, like having real energy policy, like reforming education. And we weren't going to be distracted from those things.

The President's decision to press ahead on all fronts at once set the course of future events.

If the crisis was one of many things, it meant the President had to rely on advisors like Summers. But that choice assured a conventional response and kept in power those responsible for creating the problem. Summers had worked to repeal the Glass-Steagall Act in 1999 and immunize derivatives from state bucket-shop laws in 2000. When Glass-Steagall was repealed, Summers said,

> Today Congress voted to update the rules that have governed financial services since the Great Depression and replace them

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> with a system for the 21st century . . . This historic legislation will better enable American companies to compete in the new economy.

Summers, shortly after a five-year term as president of Harvard University, told the *New York Times*, "There is a temptation to go for what is comfortable, but this would be a mistake. . . . The universities have matchless resources that demand that they seize the moment." Summers sought, in the words of *Vanity Fair*'s Nina Munk, "to lead (or force) the university into a glorious renaissance." There were, of course, many who did not think Harvard needed a glorious renaissance. Under Summers' watch, Harvard used interest-rate swaps to hedge against some of their riskier investments. These swaps have come back to haunt the university. Interest rates plunged and the losses piled up—eventually reaching one billion dollars.

In the 1960's our commercial banks decided that commercial banking—within the confines of Glass-Steagall—was not a good business model. First, they tried to do an end-run around the statute. In *Investment Co. Institute* v. *Camp* (1971), the Supreme Court struck down a common trust fund proposed by the banks, which looked a lot like a mutual fund. The Court found the language of Glass-Steagall "appear[s] clearly to prohibit this activity." Section 16 of Glass-Steagall provided "nothing herein contained shall authorize the purchase by a national bank for its own account of any shares of stock of any corporation." Section 21 stated that

> it shall be unlawful for any person or firm issuing, underwriting, selling, or distributing stocks, bonds, debentures, notes, or other securities to engage at the same time to any extent whatever in the business of deposit banking.

Once the banks were freed from the constraints of Glass-Steagall, they quickly changed their business model, chasing more complex, higher-profit, and ever-riskier financial instruments. They retained the privileges and protections that the regulatory period had provided, including implied taxpayer liability. Banks purchased securities for their own proprietary accounts and for making and taking bets in their new gamblers' club—thus becoming hedge funds, though the public thought they were still banks. Their bets were not all winners: In September 2008 TARP put $85 billion into AIG, we were told, to save that insurance company. Five months later, the Obama administration, under intense congressional pressure, disclosed that $13 billion of that figure had allowed AIG to pay 100 cents on the dollar on Goldman Sachs' bets. Some said the $13 billion saved Goldman from the fate of Lehman and Bear Stearns.

In January, former Fed Chairman Paul Volcker said the conglomerates enabled by the lifting of Glass-Steagall restrictions are "unmanageable." Then in March, Bloomberg News reported, he suggested that "Maybe we ought to have a kind of two-tier financial system." Volcker believes the bankers' proprietary trading—even if it was not pure gambling—is incompatible with a taxpayer guarantee against failure.

Volcker was appointed by President-elect Obama in November 2008 as the chair of his Economic Recovery Advisory Board. But Volcker's Glass-Steagall-like recommendations were at odds with the President's point man on the economy. In July, Larry Summers told London's *Financial Times*, "My role is to make sure that the President gets access to the best economic thinking he can on everything that touches the economy . . . That means making sure that no arguments go unscrutinized."

New York State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo reported that the five largest banks that received TARP funds from the federal government had paid 5,000 employees more than one million dollars each in 2008:

> When the banks did very poorly, they were bailed out by taxpayers and their employees were still paid well. Bonuses and overall compensation did not vary significantly as profits diminished.

JPMorgan Chase led the Millionaires Club with 1,626 employees who received at least that amount; Goldman Sachs had 953, while Citigroup, which is 30-percent owned by the U.S. government, had 738.

American households have lost $14 trillion in wealth—more than their collective earnings last year. The Bush and Obama administrations have borrowed and spent vast sums to cover the bankers' losses. New taxes on the middle class—despite President Obama's pledge—are on the table. Treasury Secretary Geithner said on August 2 that to fight deficits, "We are going to do what it takes."

In 1816, Thomas Jefferson wrote,

> I am not among those who fear the people. They, and not the rich, are our dependence for continued freedom. And to preserve their independence, we must not let our rulers load us with perpetual debt. . . . If we run into such debts, as that we must be taxed in our meat and in our drink, in our necessaries and our comforts, in our labors and our amusements, for our callings and our creeds, as the people of England are, our people, like them, must come to labor sixteen hours in the twenty-four, give the earnings of fifteen of these to the government for their debts and daily expenses; and the sixteenth being insufficient to afford us bread, we must live, as they now do, on oatmeal and potatoes; have no time to think, no means of calling the mismanagers to account; but be glad to obtain subsistence by hiring ourselves to rivet their chains on the necks of our fellow-sufferers.

William J. Quirk is the author, most recently, of Courts & Congress. *Janek Kazmierski, a third-year law student, gave invaluable assistance in the preparation of this article.*

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KENNEDY FUNERAL(S)

Eunice Kennedy Shriver died less than two weeks before her brother Edward, beginning a month of tributes to the Catholic left's first family that reached a crescendo when Senator Kennedy was laid to rest. But there was a difference between the two Kennedy siblings that was seldom mentioned in the encomiums: Mrs. Shriver's Catholic liberalism did not always subordinate her Catholicism to her liberalism.

Consider abortion. Eunice Kennedy married Robert Sargent Shriver, Jr., who in 1972 was the last pro-life candidate to grace a national Democratic ticket. Their partisan and family loyalties sometimes led them to support pro-abortion politicians like son-in-law Arnold Schwarzenegger and a certain candidate of "acid, amnesty, and abortion." Yet starting with the "One Million for Life" campaign to recruit one million adoptive parents, they both continued actively to oppose abortion throughout their lives.

In 1992, the Shrivers joined with Pennsylvania Gov. Bob Casey in the last serious effort to nudge the Democratic Party away from pro-abortion extremism. They signed a statement urging their party's convention to adopt "a new understanding" of the issue, "one that does not pit mother against child" but pursues "policies that responsibly protect and advance the interest of mothers and their children, both before and after birth."

When a national pro-choice group used the image of President John F. Kennedy to urge Catholic bishops to stifle their pro-life advocacy, Mrs. Shriver wrote a letter to the *New York Times* taking strong exception. She was an advisory-board member of the Susan B. Anthony List—an organization dedicated to electing pro-life women to Congress—and was honored by an organization called Feminists for Life. Both Shrivers were members of Democrats for Life of America.

Earlier in his political career, Ted Kennedy agreed. In a memorable 1971 letter to a pro-life voter, Senator Kennedy wrote that "the legalization of abortion on demand is not in accordance with the value which our society places on human life." He considered his pro-life views consistent with liberalism's desire to protect the weak from the strong: "Wanted or unwanted, I believe that human life, even at its earliest stages, has certain rights which must be recognized—the right to be born, the right to love, the right to grow old."

But unlike other disadvantaged groups liberals profess to protect, human beings in the earliest stages of development cannot vote. Which brings us to another key difference between Ted Kennedy and Eunice Kennedy Shriver: He had to face the voters of a very liberal, mostly nominally Catholic state. Consequently, he quickly changed his position on abortion once *Roe* v. *Wade* made it a national litmus-test issue.

Could Ted Kennedy have survived politically if he had stayed true to his pro-life beliefs, as his sister did? Thomas Dennelly, the man who wrote the letter that elicited Kennedy's pro-life response, hoped so. "I wrote it because I felt as a prominent Catholic family it would be politically important for Kennedy to oppose abortion so other Catholics would not back away from their position," he told the *National Catholic Register*.

But almost every other Massachusetts politician has made the same judgment that Kennedy did. Although Mitt Romney reinvented himself as an abortion opponent for last year's Republican primaries, he had never faced his state's voters as a pro-life candidate. Joseph Malone was elected state treasurer as a pro-life Catholic in 1990, but he switched sides in anticipation of a run for governor.

Despite being the second-most Catholic state, Massachusetts hasn't elected a pro-life governor since Democrat Edward King in 1978. Pro-life state Senate President William Bulger and House Speaker Thomas Finneran have been replaced with abortion supporters. The only pro-life statewide elected official is the auditor, whose position has nothing to do with abortion policy.

Support for legal abortion doesn't even keep a Catholic politician from being fêted by the Archdiocese of Boston or celebrated at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Basilica. Eunice Kennedy Shriver wasn't an outlier just within her own family. Kennedy Catholicism is the religion of choice in her native state.

If Ted Kennedy has a lot to answer for, then so do his enablers and the Catholic constituents the late senator's pro-abortion absolutism was meant to accommodate.

—*W. James Antle III*

ALEX DRAGNICH, R.I.P.

The death at age 97 of Prof. Alex N. Dragnich, a leading American expert on Serbian and Yugoslav history, marks the departure of one of the last witnesses to an era in which this country's involvement in Southeastern Europe was neither contrary to her traditional values nor overtly harmful to the region's inhabitants. His dozen books, two-score scholarly articles, and over a hundred op-eds dealing with the history and politics of the Balkans compare to the mountains of recent drivel on this subject like Russell Kirk's work compares with that of Midge Decter.

In 1907, Dragnich's father, Novica, left his dirt-poor Montenegrin village of Morakovo, intending to earn enough in America to buy a farm and then return home. His restless nature took him first to Illinois, then to Nevada, Wyoming, Alaska, and finally to a remote farm in the state of Washington. He did not save a penny, however, and had to borrow money to bring his wife over in 1911. The first of their six children, Alex, was born in 1912.

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"I had a happy childhood in that wilderness," Dragnich remembered, "but when I was nine the Ferry County truant officer turned up at our cabin and told my father that I had to go to school." Alex did very well in class, once he had learned English. Recognizing the tall, skinny boy's talents, the teachers encouraged him to go to college. His studies were interrupted during the Great Depression, but he was graduated with honors from the University of Washington in Seattle in 1938. Supported by his wife, Adele, a nurse, he completed his doctorate in political science at Berkeley in 1942.

Dragnich spent the war years as an analyst with the Office of Strategic Services, specializing in the Balkans. After the war he was posted to Belgrade as cultural attaché at the U.S. Embassy and director of the American Cultural Center. He came to a ruined and hungry city soon after Tito's victory in the Yugoslav civil war. It was dangerous for a local to visit the Center without first securing the approval of the feared UDBA (secret police), let alone to have any unauthorized contact with an American diplomat. Dragnich was followed all the time, and he took it in stride. On a trip to central Serbia he noticed that the car of his tail had suddenly vanished from the rear-view mirror. He told the driver to turn around, found the distraught secret policeman trying to fix the stalled engine, and gave him a lift to the nearest town.

On his return to the United States Dragnich joined the faculty of Vanderbilt University in 1950, where he retired as professor *emeritus* in 1978. His Yugoslav experiences, combined with exhaustive scholarship, resulted in his first book, *Tito's Promised Land* (1954), after which he was for decades *persona non grata* in communist Yugoslavia. It was a wholesale destruction of the Tito myth, propagated in the 1950's by Western post-Stalinist leftists, journalists on the lookout for socialism with a human face, and (especially in Britain) a powerful cabal of establishmentarian historians—William Deakin, Stephen Clissold, Elisabeth Barker, Phyllis Auty, Basil Davidson—who regarded Tito's 1948 break with Stalin as a retroactive justification of Britain's wartime policy of betraying General Mihailovich.

Serious scholarship of the past half-century has proved that Dragnich was right and they were wrong: Tito was a ruthless and bloody dictator whose wartime resistance had the sole objective of grabbing power after the war. His Yugoslavia was first a slaughterhouse, then a Western-financed ego trip, and finally a powder keg, unfree and unviable.

In 1961 Dragnich was the original author of the popular textbook *Major European Governments*, which is still in print after almost half a century. But it was his work on the Balkans that cemented his reputation. *The First Yugoslavia* (1983) was a pioneering effort in English to throw light on the quest for a viable political system in the kingdom between 1918 and 1941. *The Saga of Kosovo* (1984) provides an outline of the history of the southern Serbian province that should have been essential reading for every Western journalist dispatched to cover the war there 15 years later. His *Serbs and Croats: The Struggle in Yugoslavia* (1993) focused on several essentials of the recent Balkan crisis that remain little known—or are studiously ignored—by most Western "experts" and politicians, including the key problem of Tito's arbitrarily drawn boundaries between federal units. His key themes were further developed in *Yugoslavia's Disintegration and the Struggle for Truth* (1996) and *Serbia and Yugoslavia: Historical Studies and Contemporary Commentaries* (1998). In 2005 came Dragnich's short yet masterfully authoritative *Serbia Through the Ages*. (My review, "History Is Contemporary," can be found in the January 2006 issue of *Chronicles*.)

Active until the end, Alex Dragnich was too much of an old-fashioned American not to be an optimist. He believed that, "had the policy makers and the media been better informed about Balkan and particularly Serbian history, conclusions and actions may have been very different." He hoped that his fair-minded and reasonable account of events in the former Yugoslavia would prevent future mistakes and "lead to some reassessment of recent policies and media coverage."

May Alex Dragnich's friends and admirers keep that hope alive—even when it seems to go against all odds—as a tribute to the stamina of a great and good man.

—*Srdja Trifkovic*

OBITER DICTA

Our poet this month is our poetry editor, **Catharine Savage Brosman**, professor *emerita* at Tulane University. A widely published poet, she is the author of several collections of verse, including her latest, *Range of Light* (LSU Press). Her work appears in this issue at the request of the editor.

Our cover art is provided by our interior artist, **George McCartney, Jr.** Mr. McCartney studied at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and received a bachelor's of art from the State University of New York at Geneseo. Since 1997, he has worked in various media in the fields of illustration, graphic design, and textiles. George resides in North Carolina with his wife, Kristin, and their children.

Our interior art is provided by **Melanie Anderson**. Mrs. Anderson, our designer, received her B.F.A. from Northern Illinois University.

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by Thomas Fleming

Remembering Who We Were

We were in Athens, near the end of July, having dinner with some Greek friends at Attikos, a popular rooftop restaurant with a view of the Parthenon. Like most conservatives, our friends are somewhat pessimistic about what the future holds for their country, and from their description it seems to me that as the left has grown more virulent, the soft-bellied right has, for the most part, lost its nerve.

Greece, like other E.U. countries, is being flooded by immigrants. In Greece, though Albanians continue to cause a great deal of mischief, a greater danger is presented by Muslims from North Africa and the Middle East.

For at least 800 years, Greece's main threat has been Muslim Turks, who attacked and finally conquered the Byzantine Empire in 1453. Even after they were liberated, Greeks under Turkish rule have been harassed and persecuted. There was a terrific slaughter in Anatolia after World War I. In 1922 Kemal "Atatürk" personally presided over a genocide in Smyrna. And, in 1955, the Turkish government launched a pogrom in which some Greeks in Constantinople were killed, and many more raped and beaten. Their homes, schools, shops, printing presses, and churches were attacked and destroyed.

A cynical Allen Dulles, who happened to be in Turkey, advised the government to blame the disruptions on the communists, since Turkey was regarded as a solid ally in the Cold War. The State Department clucked its collective tongue and did nothing, and it has refused to do anything ever since. Whenever Turks attack Greeks, the United States inquires about the position of Turks in Western Thrace, who, if Greeks behaved like Turks, would have been forced out long ago. We cannot, apparently, even instruct our "allies" not to fly their warplanes into Greek airspace. And the conservative government of Kostas Karamanlis? It does nothing. Indeed, Prime Minister Karamanlis stood best man at the wedding of the son of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the nationalist-Islamicist prime minister of Turkey, and the Greek press, rather than standing up for the Greek people, routinely urges conciliation and self-abasement.

The Greek left is as poisoned with self-hatred as the left in Britain and America, from whom they sucked the venom. They have done their best to turn a noble and dignified language into a gutter dialect, masterminded a spelling simplification that tends to cut modern Greeks off from the writings of their ancient and Byzantine ancestors, and they now transliterate names phonetically into English as if they were just a Third World country. My hotel, for example, is on Odós Falírou (accents added), which disguises the fact that *hodos* is the ancient word for *road* and Phaleron is a famous harbor. Simplified spelling, in any language, is an act of historical vandalism.

Not surprisingly, most Greeks are not terribly fond of the United States, though they never seem to hold American citizens responsible for the actions taken by their democratically elected government. American-style democracy, they probably realize, is a tightly controlled oligarchy that has deliberately kept the people too stupid to complain about anything but taxes.

Our friend Nikos Hidiroglou waits until after dinner (about 11) to tell me that he has promised an interview to a conservative newspaper, *Eleftheri Ora*. When I ask what subject he has in mind, he glances through a copy of *Chronicles* and hits on the ad for my lectures on the Greek conservative mind. Greeks have been taught the same distorted liberal version of Greek history and literature that we Americans have been indoctrinated into, and he expresses some skepticism, adding, "You know, I hardly never go up there," pointing at the Acropolis.

I begin to explain the theme of my lectures. Ancient Greeks, from Homer to Aristotle, valued kinship and friendship, family, clan, city, and Hellenism above all universal values. The most important political philosopher of antiquity, Aristotle, had no use for what we call equality or mass democracy. He preferred a balanced constitution in which the wealthy and well-born could have the influence to which they were entitled, and even crazy old Plato, whatever his faults as a utopian dreamer, hated Athenian democracy and takes Sparta as his model. Andreas, a political activist who occasionally writes for us, interjects that he comes from the Peloponnesus and is pro-Spartan from birth. When I point out that he is actually an Arcadian, and the Arcadians were the enemies of Sparta, he responds, "My people belonged to the pro-Spartan faction. They were real conservatives."

Even here in Athens, the establishment of democracy was largely a work of political opportunism. Cleisthenes, the alleged founder of democracy, is said to have taken the people into his faction, not because he believed in democracy but because he wanted to dish his rivals. His descendant Pericles ruled as a virtual dictator.

Even during the most radical period of democracy, only free adult male Athenian citizens could vote, and Pericles even had a law passed restricting citizenship to the

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sons of two citizen parents. In some ways, tiny Attica was more decentralized than the 19th-century United States or Switzerland.

Anyone of sound mind who goes to Athens during the summer ought to have a good reason and a large supply of 50+ sunscreen. The delicious pleasures of air travel and mass tourism are compounded by heat that even the Greeks find oppressive. The coolest days were in the mid-90's, and on several days the temperature reached 105 or higher. I think of our upcoming Winter School. Beautiful January, with empty streets and daily highs in the mid-50's—how I long for you.

We had spent our first morning in Athens, wandering about the Agora, trying to make sense of the place, which was both market and civic center. I had not visited the Agora often enough to get the same understanding of it that I have for the Forum Romanum in Rome. (I say "in Rome," because there is a Roman Forum in Athens.)

I had chipped away at my ignorance by looking again at John M. Camp's guidebook published by the American School, though it was my wife's sharper eyes and ability to read a site that guided me out through the bewildering landscape of marble. What a place. The Agora is a rich jumble of ruins and historical fragments overgrown with East Mediterranean weeds from Neolithic to modern times, representing 5,000 years of history. A man who understood this place fully would know a great deal, indeed. I have scratched only the surface—metaphorically, of course: Archaeologists frown on amateurs setting up shop with spade and sieve on their sites.

The so-called Theseion (perhaps a temple to Hephaestus) is one of the best-preserved Greek temples. Set up on a slope above the west side of the Agora, it contains several clever variations on the Doric order. Considering the fragments of the sculptural ornamentation, I am reminded, as always, of how prone the Greeks were to divide the world up into opposing camps: gods *versus* giants, Lapiths *versus* centaurs, Greeks *versus* Amazons, Greeks *versus* Trojans. These motifs are quite correctly related to the heightened sense of identity they gained from the Persian Wars, but there are earlier examples which indicate that the conflict with Barbary only intensified their ethnocentrism.

Ancient Greeks knew who they were and were not shy about vaunting their superiority over lesser races. On the other hand, they were almost too eager to attribute their own advances to Egyptians or Phoenicians. A self-confident people does not have to elevate itself by climbing up the reputations of its defeated rivals. Herodotus, always ready to make fun of the topsy-turvy world of Egypt, was perfectly happy to accept the Egyptians' chauvinistic version of history, and Xenophon the Athenian admired not only the Spartans but the Persian nobility, whose warriors had twice invaded Greece.

A few days later, in the new Acropolis Museum, I am able to see for the first time the famous relief sculpture of Athena leaning on her spear. The piece has been given the title *Pensive Athena*, but considering the date (460 B.C.), I wonder if she is not pensive but simply weary of defending Athens, for 30 years, from her Persian enemies. The sad part of the story is that, in defending herself and the Greek islands from a multiethnic "evil empire" (actually, the Persians were the kindest imperialists the world had known up to that point), Athens became as ruthless an imperial power as the hated Persians.

We have stripped ourselves of our usable past of ancient and medieval, British and American history, and replaced it with a thin-gruel ideology of either Marxist feminism or democratic capitalism, which we then export around the globe.

I think about this conversation all next week, when we are enjoying Taki's hospitality on board *Bushido*. When Nikos' interview came out as a front-page headline piece in *Eleftheri Ora*, it apparently caused a minor sensation, at least among the Athenian conservatives who read the paper. Toynbee criticized Greeks for always being haunted by a distant golden age—the Trojan War, when the gap between gods and the semidivine kings and heroes was smaller than it became, the brilliance of Periclean Athens, the miraculous conquests of Alexander, the glories of the Byzantine Empire before its decline and fall. If Greeks once went too far in admiring their ancestors, Greeks today are being asked to swallow a revisionist history that regards the humane religion of Christian Byzantium as morally inferior to the empires of the cannibal Aztecs and Incas, and the artistic and literary treasures of ancient Athens as decidedly inferior to the long glories of majestic Zimbabwe.

What a pernicious ideology Anglo-American liberalism has been in all its forms! For liberals, ancient Greeks were individualists who liberated themselves from the shackles of religion, class, and tradition, while for the left, they were misogynistic, xenophobic, slave-owning capitalists. It is not that American historiography has been any different. So-called conservative historians, whatever their field of specialization, tend to be either shills for democratic capitalism or outright liars. We have stripped ourselves of our usable past of ancient and medieval, British and American history, and replaced this past with a thin-gruel ideology of either Marxist feminism or democratic capitalism, which we then export around the globe to weak countries like Greece or Iraq that have real histories to be proud of. We were so busy in Baghdad, tearing down the statue of Saddam and promising women's rights, that we hardly noted that Iraqi museums were being looted of the irreplaceable treasures of ancient Sumerians, Babylonians, and Assyrians.

The great Greek poet C.P. Cavafy once wondered what we would do without the barbarians. He need not have worried. We have, to paraphrase Pogo, met the barbarians, and they is us.

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Portobello Mushrooms

by Catharine Savage Brosman

They're now in vogue, along with fava beans, veggie burgers,
feta cheese: all good for us, perhaps, but not uniquely so—
imported often and expensive, sought in grocery stores
and fancy restaurants by food snobs, vegetarians,
and others who have "principles." Where's the *bello* part
in *portobello*? Ugly and quite rotten-looking, they resemble
some strange, slimy creature living underground, or rather,
in the sea, a cousin to a sting-ray or a jellyfish, a slug

or barnacle. Good heavens, they've got *gills*! And I'm
supposed to have that in a pita sandwich, or, worse still,
in lieu of steak! Unless they're finely chopped,
they cannot be disguised, and even then, that dark brown skin
looks awful, surely tough. *Cèpes, champignons, morelles*—
they too are fungi, like the portobello, but at least
they're small and delicate and generally pale; yet I'm not sure
that *they* are not disgusting also. Do we really want to eat

a reproductive organ sprung tumescent from dead leaves
and compost? Gastronomic tolerance is quite amazing,
if you think of it: consider liver, tongue, brains,
tripe, and kidneys, not to mention mountain oysters. Writing
this, I fear I shall end up a vegan or a Jain, not on account
of "principles," but after much reflection on such things.
I understand the man who starves himself, less from a saintly
impulse than through yearning for a kind of purity,

an unadulterated, out-of-body state, forswearing nastiness
and needs. But that is *death*. Serve up the mushrooms, then,
well diced and in a sauce, with garlic or another flavor, lest
they seem too close to nature: that *my* nature, too,
may be transcended, sublimated, borne beyond itself—
a feint (for even Adam and his rib-mate, newly fashioned, ate
of Eden's fruits), yet an ideal—the being of the angels
without appetite, their wings transparent and their bodies light.

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Cheese

by Catharine Savage Brosman

A present from a god (great Bacchus, Pan,
Aristaeus, perhaps) and both a sign
and sustenance of cultivated man,
cheese illustrates its image as divine.

It's primitive, though, dating from the stage
when wandering animals became a herd—
yet classical, part of the Golden Age,
idyllic piping and the poets' word.

Thus cheese—fresh, half- or well-aged, over-ripe—
from cattle, camel, zebu, sheep, goat, yak,
refers us always to its prototype—
refreshment humble or symposiac.

What ingenuity in cheese! How neat, how apt,
according to the circumstance, the beast—
a model of how human beings adapt,
devising, by a common need, a feast.

The more amazingly: it's rotten stuff,
first soured and curdled, pressed, then left to mould—
fulfillment of a gastronomic bluff,
most aromatic, flavorful when old.

It's all a matter, to be sure, of taste.
While one prefers a muscled cheese, strong nerve,
another favors oozing, glaucous paste,
its subtle cream, its delicate reserve.

I fancy toothsome, hard cheese—Emmental,
Comté—or semi-hard—Cantal—or blue:
blue Stilton, gorgonzola, Roquefort, all—
(such blue blood in the veins!); so I eschew

fromage coulant—that runny Camembert,
Maroilles, Neufchâtel, and every Brie;
the crust is awful; chalky white, like glaire,
red rind, or ashen-gray, it sickens me.

The cheese, our handiwork, reflects our state:
endowed like gods, inventive and refined,
but cast in carnal matter by our fate,
strange, odorous, perverse—the taste of mind.

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Exporting Political Correctness

Through Force of Arms

by Justin Raimondo

During the early days of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the White House frequently trotted out Laura Bush to laud our soldiers' heroic efforts to "liberate" women. These were not wars of aggression or conquest. They were wars for "education," the former schoolteacher averred: "The United States government is wholeheartedly committed to the full participation of women in all aspects of Afghan society." Those awful male chauvinists in Al Qaeda and the Taliban, you see, were really *really* mean to women. Afghanistan, wailed Laura, is "only a few years removed from the reign of the terrorists, when women were denied education and every basic human right."

These remarks were delivered on the joyful occasion of the disbursement by the U.S. Treasury of upward of $20 million to support women's literacy programs in our Afghan province. Laura was quite pleased: "I've especially watched with great pride as courageous women across your country have taken on leadership roles as students, teachers, judges, doctors, business and community leaders, ministers, and governor."

I could understand a war for revenge. After all, the Afghan Taliban gave sanctuary and succor to the perpetrators of the September 11 terrorist attacks. But our invasion and occupation of Afghanistan was presented not as a punitive expedition but as an exercise in educational and moral uplift. After all, how could Afghanistan ever be "free" unless a woman could become governor, or even prime minister?

There is an eerie parallel here with an earlier attempt to invade Afghanistan and "liberate" women in the process. The Russians, when they marched across the border and installed a Soviet-style "republic," utilized the same rhetoric and rationale. In the 1980's, under the Afghan communists, the "liberation" of women was a centerpiece of the regime's "people's democratic revolution." As Deborah Ellis put it in *Women of the Afghan War*,

> The Soviet Union invades Afghanistan. The emancipation of Afghan women moves quickly. There are greater opportunities for education, employment, and professional training, especially for women in the cities. . . . Women students outnumber men at the Universities. . . . The Communists legally guarantee the equal rights of women and men. More and more women hold positions in business, government, the diplomatic corps, the police, the army, and in Parliament. Women are teachers, nurses, entertainers, doctors and lawyers. Education and employment for women becomes more acceptable through much of Afghan society.

It was the literacy program—compulsory education for women, launched by the communists as soon as they took power—that really enraged the *mujahideen*, who took up arms to defend their customs, their religion, and their patrimony. With the help of the U.S. government, they made mincemeat of the Russians and drove them out of the country—and systematically unraveled the communists' "reforms." When the communist regime fell, women remained in the workforce, but their freedoms were severely curtailed. In 1993, the Afghan supreme court declared that women must not be allowed to leave their homes without being covered in the *chador*, and that their education must be restricted to the study of Islam under the tutelage of family members. All this, by the way, was well before the rise of the Taliban: The complete reversal of the "reforms" enacted by the communists was the first order of business of those we installed in power.

We are fighting in Afghanistan today to undo our own handiwork. Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to intervene.

The Obama administration is escalating the politically correct rhetoric regarding women's rights, in Afghanistan and elsewhere, and is seemingly intent on upping the ante when it comes to social issues. Their Republican predecessors balked at a French resolution in the United Nations calling on all the world's governments to decriminalize homosexuality; as the *New York Times*' Neil Macfarquhar writes, they refused to sign, not in the name of any principle, naturally, but

> on highly technical legal grounds. The text [of the resolution], by using terminology like "without distinction of any kind," was too broad because it might be interpreted as an attempt by the federal government to override states' rights on issues like gay marriage, American diplomats and legal experts said.

Alejandro D. Wolff, then the deputy permanent repre-

Justin Raimondo is the editorial director of Antiwar.com *and the author of the recently reissued* Reclaiming the American Right: The Lost Legacy of the Conservative Movement.

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sentative, declared, "We are opposed to any discrimination, legally or politically, but the nature of our federal system prevents us from undertaking commitments and engagements where federal authorities don't have jurisdiction."

God forbid there should be any "discrimination" anywhere in the world, but it was, you see, an election year, and the Bushies did not allow themselves the luxury of following their "principles" to their logical conclusion. Instead, they had to manufacture some exotic legal-technical explanation for their unwillingness to go along with the globalization of "gay rights."

The Obamaites, who do not have to appease the Christian Right, are not so shy about carrying the "human rights" agenda of current U.S. foreign policy to its logical conclusion. As one official, explaining the decision to reverse the Bush stance, put it,

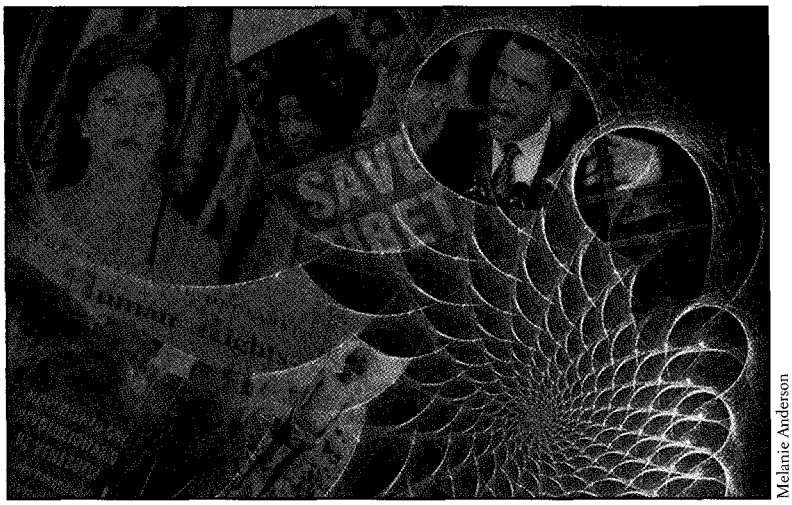
> The United States is an outspoken defender of human rights and critic of human rights abuses around the world. As such, we join with the other supporters of this statement and we will continue to remind countries of the importance of respecting the human rights of all people in all appropriate international fora.

Translation: We will continue to hector the nations of the world, who will naturally resent our unsolicited advice—thus achieving the exact opposite of our stated intentions.

Regardless of one's views on the "liberation" of women and the legalization of homosexual behavior, it is fair to ask: For whose benefit are we engaging in this unseemly nagging? Certainly not that of Afghan women (or of women anywhere, for that matter), who are still subjected to the barbaric customs of a prefeudal order in Afghanistan, even after the U.S. invasion and ongoing occupation. Similarly, our declarations of support for "gay rights" do not matter one bit to the rulers of, say, Saudi Arabia, and the six other U.S.-allied Muslim nations who enforce the death penalty for homosexual acts between consenting adults.

Not that the alleged moral concern of our rulers is authentic. It is merely a political ploy, designed to appeal not to an overseas audience, but to certain domestic constituencies—in this case, homosexual and liberal voters miffed at the continuing refusal of the Obama administration to go along with the party line on "gay marriage" and homosexuals in the military. The announcement of the reversal on the U.N. resolution coincided with a presidential proclamation honoring "Gay Pride Month" in August—just in time to distribute to the various local gay events a special presidential message extolling the alleged virtues of "the LGBT community."

This underscores a salient point about how U.S. foreign policy is made, and why it takes the form it does. Foreign policy is all about domestic politics. Laura Bush hailing the advance of Afghan women into the front ranks of their hopelessly backward society is meant to appeal to a certain voter demographic: young, middle-class, educated white women, "soccer moms" imbued with a feminist sensibility virtually from birth. Obama lecturing the rest of the world on its sorry record when it comes to tolerating homosexuals is aimed at the same general demographic, if you include young white homosexual men and their heterosexual *doppelgängers*.



Melanie Anderson

Our rulers, whether Democrats or Republicans, care about one thing and one thing only: staying in power. They will do what is necessary to appease whichever pressure group can give them a political advantage, however momentary or conditional. This, after all, is what democracy is all about. The result is that the sheer number of overseas trouble spots where our government is woefully constrained and even dictated to by an important—or not so important—voter constituency is alarming.

The influence of the Israel lobby on our Middle Eastern policy is well known, but, on a smaller scale, the same strategy has been successfully pursued by the "human rights in Tibet" crowd, led by the Hollywood left, which culminated in Bill Clinton personally hectoring the Chinese for their lack of openness on his visit to Beijing. (His remarks were broadcast, uncut, by state television.) Likewise, organizations representing Eastern European countries, in alliance with the big arms manufacturers and the neoconservatives, were the ones who successfully lobbied for NATO expansion—and for the Russophobic foreign policy pursued by the Bush administration and continued unabated by the Obamaites. Every session of Congress witnesses a mobilization in favor of recognizing the horror of the Armenian holocaust, introduced by the Armenian lobby, and every year the Turkish lobby—with more money and clout—knocks it out of the ring.

Our compulsion to crusade for feminism and homosexual rights on a global scale does not arise simply from an abstract multiculti devotion to "human rights" ideology for its own sake. Mostly, it is a matter of old-fashioned ward-heeling politics.

Every ethnic lobby, from the Moldovans to the Manchu-

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rians, is lobbying for "human rights" in the motherland. They all yearn for the United States to "liberate" their home countries, so they can bring their relatives over in droves—as "human rights" refugees seeking asylum from "oppression."

Our very nature as a multicultural world empire, combined with the now universally accepted dogma of political correctness, has determined our appalling transformation. From a modest confederation that sought only "peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none," we have evolved into a global scold and world-class bully intent on exporting the worst aspects of our society to the four corners of the earth.

Regardless of one's views on the "liberation" of women and the legalization of homosexual behavior, it is fair to ask: For whose benefit are we engaging in this unseemly nagging? Certainly not that of Afghan women, who are still subjected to the barbaric customs of a prefeudal order in Afghanistan, even after the U.S. invasion and ongoing occupation. Similarly, our declarations of support for "gay rights" do not matter one bit to the rulers of, say, Saudi Arabia, and the six other U.S.-allied Muslim nations who enforce the death penalty for homosexual acts between consenting adults.

Far from advancing the pursuit of a proper foreign policy—*i.e.*, one that actually serves some recognizable semblance of our interests—this posturing and preening on the world stage undercuts our position internationally. At a time when the United States is supposedly engaged in a generations-long war against an implacable and highly dangerous enemy, battling Al Qaeda and its allies for hearts and minds in the Arab/Muslim world, is it really all that necessary to support feminism in Afghanistan, of all places, albeit only rhetorically? Surely the advancement of "LGBT rights" can wait for a time when such "homophobes" as Osama bin Laden pass from the scene.

Yes, Tibet languishes under the Han boot, and Chinese workers lack the "right" to organize independent labor unions, and yet neither freedom for Tibet nor a full-scale campaign by the AFL-CIO to organize China's workers would advance our interests one iota—quite the contrary. An independent Tibet would fall prey to regional rivalries and instability, while the institution of "labor rights" in China would throttle U.S. companies who have shipped their factories overseas and lessen Beijing's ability to buy our debt.

It is true that the Baltic nations, as well as Poland and the other former Warsaw Pact countries, live in the shadow of Russian imperialism (or at least the indelible memory of it), and yet we have interests quite apart from the nationalist sentiments of, say, the Polish-American community—interests that transcend the narrow particularism of the various Eastern European ethnic communities. These interests were ill served by the expansion of NATO and the subsequent alienation of Russia, whose cooperation is essential to the fight to eradicate Al Qaeda and to the vital effort to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons and materials. Naturally, the rhetoric of "human rights" has been used by our government and its media acolytes as a club with which to beat the Russians, especially Putin, who is denounced as the 21st-century version of Stalin. Russia, we are told, is "backsliding" into "authoritarianism"—this, coming from a people whose legislators adopted the "PATRIOT Act" without even bothering to read it.

Which brings us to the inevitable hypocrisy of our own insufferable self-righteousness, for our application of strict "human rights" standards is extremely selective. Our friends and allies enjoy extraordinary exemptions not afforded to lesser nations. Great Britain, for example, has no real freedom of speech. One can be arrested—or, if a visitor, barred from the country—for expressing politically incorrect views. If you operate a website that runs afoul of the diversity cyberpolice, you may and probably will be jailed—even if you flee to the United States and seek asylum, as Simon Sheppard and Stephen Whittle found out. Facing prosecution in Britain and a sentence of five years in prison for writings on their website, they were arrested immediately after arriving at Los Angeles International Airport and informing immigration officials that they were seeking asylum, and summarily extradited back to the United Kingdom.

"Human rights" in Britain? Our rulers could care less. They would much rather pontificate on the lack of "gay rights" in Upper Volta.

On the issue of religious freedom, both convenience and fashion dictate an appalling double standard. While the Bush administration pretended to care about the alleged "right" of Christian missionaries to proselytize in China, the slaughter of Christians in U.S.-occupied Iraq by our Iraqi allies was accompanied by silence. It is apparently OK for the Germans to ban the practice of Scientology, but not for the Russians to restrict the activities of Western evangelists.

Once we get involved in the business of pronouncing moral judgment, we inevitably get tripped up and entangled in an ever-growing web of contradictions, shifting standards, and "special cases." Better to get out of that business and back to protecting and advancing our legitimate concerns.

Yet, it seems, we are incorrigible when it comes to moral posturing, doomed forever to reenact a morality play, the point of which is a celebration of our own insufferably virtuous instincts. After all, where can you find a government-sponsored annual report subjecting each and every other nation on earth to the moral calculus of "human rights"? Only in America. ◁

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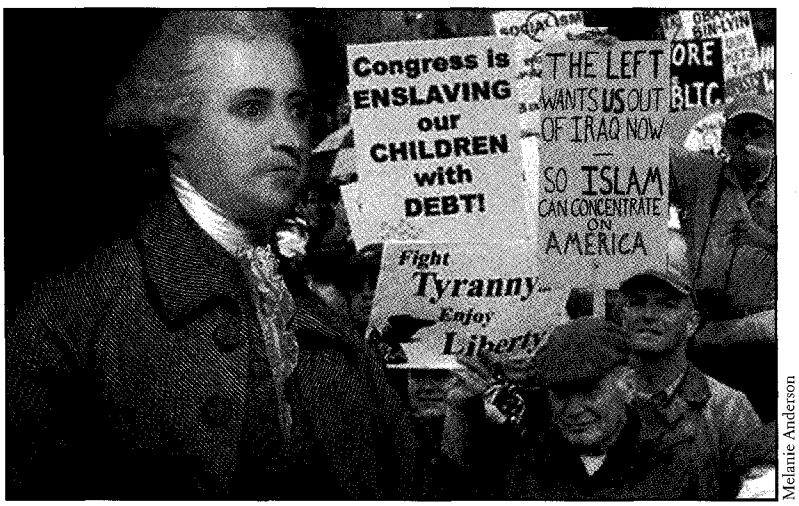
Obama's Right-Wing Cheerleaders

Rah-Rah Government Intervention!

by Leon Hadar


Congress is ENSLAVING our CHILDREN with DEBT!
THE LEFT WANTS US OUT OF IRAQ NOW
SO ISLAM CAN CONCENTRATE ON AMERICA
Fight Tyranny... Enjoy Liberty

Melanie Anderson

The Tea Partiers and the Town Hallers are clearly angry that the Obama administration so quickly began to pursue policies that run contrary to traditional conservative values—values that are based on skepticism of, if not hostility toward, the role of government in the management of human affairs. Indeed, if there was one thing that used to define American conservatives it was the philosophical axiom that the state and its political class have neither the moral right nor the administrative capability to direct people's lives. So is it really surprising that so many conservatives, ranging from the FOX News pundit (a term that derives from the Sanskrit *pandita,* meaning "learned"; *e.g.*, Hannity the Learned) to your typical town-hall protester, believe that the federal government under President Barack Obama is committed to expanding the power of the state to promote a militant liberal or social-democratic agenda, including economic collectivism and social engineering at home and abroad?

On second thought, I probably need to scratch my reference to "abroad" in the preceding sentence. Yes, the heated town-hall meetings seem to be rousing to action many who describe themselves as conservatives. They are fuming about last year's $700 billion bank bailout (which was actually proposed by President George W. Bush) and about President Obama's $787 billion stimulus package as well as his healthcare reform proposals. The Town Hallers and the Tea Partiers were "part of a phenomenon enabling national conservative groups to galvanize grassroots anger about big government and reshape the debate over President Obama's health care plan. Suddenly, it's the conservatives' turn to be fired up," *USA Today* concluded.

And cable-television talking heads are also suggesting that the antigovernment rage expressed by these conservative protesters reflects rising fears over schemes allegedly being drawn up by liberals in Washington to raise taxes, to bail out more irresponsible businesses and consumers, to nationalize large chunks of the American economy, to confiscate citizens' guns, to keep alive a hopeless public-education system, to consolidate a multiculturalist program favored by wise Latina women, and more—killing Grandma, for example. These liberals, they say, are intent on using the power of the government, including "propaganda or major infrastructure development to foster social harmony and economic growth"—which is how Wikipedia describes "nation building"—at home.

Still, to the "we're mad as hell, and we're not going to take it anymore" conservatives, standing up to big government stops at the water's edge. Although national conservative groups like the Tea Party Patriots and the more established Freedom Works, led by former House majority leader Dick Armey, are trying to galvanize grassroots anger over the growing power of the federal government,

Leon Hadar is a research fellow in foreign-policy studies at the Cato Institute.

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this populist fire and fury has been applied in a very selective way. Borrowing a phrase from Uncle Joe (Stalin), you could describe this effort as "Conservatism in One Country." Many of our irate antistatist conservatives want to see the same U.S. government whose power they decry when it tries to manage the school system in, say, Lebanon, Ohio, managing lots of stuff in, say, Lebanon. In a way, they have become born-again government interventionists, progressive internationalists, and social engineers when it comes to Iraq and other distant countries whose values are alien to most Americans.

We see a certain touch of the theater of the absurd in political experts on television proposing that the GOP has become a "regional party" whose leaders and activists should be considered as political heirs to the proponents of states' rights in the South. These are the same Republican leaders and conservative activists who are now demanding that we advance the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr., in Mesopotamia and the broader Middle East; not here, but there—and everywhere. Just a few weeks before the media frenzy over the healthcare debate, CNN, MSNBC, and FOX were preoccupied—*obsessed* is the better word—with the outcome of the presidential election in Iran and twittering demonstrators in Tehran. The strident calls for Washington to take a more activist role in backing the groups opposed to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad—dispensing U.S. government funds to the "pro-democracy" activists or perhaps even conducting a "regime change"—came from the usual right-wing suspects, including Republican politicians and conservative pundits led by former Republican presidential candidate John McCain and the "foreign-policy intellectuals" and armchair strategists at the editorial pages of the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post,* and *The Weekly Standard.*

Interestingly enough, it was President Obama's measured response to the crisis in Iran that reflected the traditional conservative disposition *à la* Edmund Burke, who tended to be skeptical about grandiose nation-building and social-engineering projects at home *and* abroad. One wonders how Burke, a critic of British imperialism, would have reacted to the spectacle of the former Republican administration and its conservative backers in Congress and the media suggesting, on the eve of the war in Iraq, that all you need is, yes, government—a few days and nights of aerial bombing, 140,000 U.S. troops, bureaucrats with good intentions, and economic aid from Washington—and, *voilà*! we have "nation-building" on the shores of the Euphrates or in Hindu Kush, followed by the spread of religious freedom, individual rights, and democracy among members of societies that are just starting to enter the Age of Enlightenment (maybe). Just give government a chance—in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Palestine—and thousands of years of deep-seated hatred among tribal, ethnic, and religious communities will come to a happy end.

That this supposedly conservative narrative was nothing more than a Wilsonian liberal fantasy that ended up producing horrific suffering for millions of people in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Palestine—not to mention the high costs in American life and treasure—has failed to convince American conservatives to return to a traditional mode. The members of the small brigade of antiwar conservatives—yes, we could probably fill one or two phone booths—who tend to blame the Republican establishment and the neoconservative ideologues for the current foreign-policy direction, and who suggest that conservatives in Middle America adhere to a more anti-interventionist agenda, should probably examine the results of a recent *Washington Post*-ABC News poll which concluded that a majority of Americans now see the war in Afghanistan as not worth fighting, and that only one quarter say more U.S. troops should be sent to the country.

Now that sounds to me like the kind of realpolitik sentiments that were traditionally associated with conservatism. But guess what? It was Republican voters who were the most enthusiastic about America's nation-building project in Afghanistan. While 70 percent of Democrats and 40 percent of independents believed that the war in Afghanistan was not worth fighting, 70 percent of Republicans thought it was exactly what the United States should be doing. Similarly, while 70 percent of liberals and 52 percent of independents said that the costs of fighting the war in Afghanistan outweighed the benefits, 58 percent of conservatives thought the opposite. Moreover, while Democrats and liberals were opposed to the Obama administration's policy of increasing the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan, Republicans and conservatives were in favor of strengthening our military presence there. In fact, a majority of Republicans and conservatives approve of Obama's handling of the war in Afghanistan.

Or to put it differently, the same Republicans and conservatives—the elites *and* the masses—who are bashing the Obama administration as "socialistic" and "fascistic," a cross between Stalin and Hitler, seem quite enthusiastic about Obama as imperialist nation-builder. The same conservatives who have warned of the harmful, unintended consequences of government projects have been ignoring concerns that America's nation-building ventures in Iraq and Afghanistan could not only fail but destabilize the broader Middle East. Moreover, they apparently do not see that these imperialist policies could ignite more anti-American terrorism around the world, not to mention the harmful impact they could have on the growth of U.S. government power and their effect on the economy and civil rights in America.

President Obama seems to be following a more realistic foreign-policy path than his predecessor. In addition to resisting pressure from the Republicans and conservatives—as well as the liberal internationalists and humanitarian interventionists in his own administration and party—to intervene in domestic politics in Iran, not

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to mention the calls for U.S. and/or Israeli military strikes against Iran's nuclear installations, President Obama has embraced a less aggressive approach in dealing with Russia while placing Bush's Freedom Agenda on the back burner and trying to awaken the dormant Israeli-Palestinian peace process. But his foreign-policy realism is being challenged by his vice president and his secretary of state, who, together with the powerful lobbies of human-rights activists, environmentalists, and feminists, are trying to force him to "do something" about the "threats" of an allegedly revanchist Russia and this or that "rogue regime," while the generals in the Pentagon and their allies in Congress call on him to build more military bases in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere and to keep the American Empire alive.

A Republican opposition that espoused a traditional conservative philosophy in both domestic and foreign policies could have been in a position to counterbalance the power of the liberal internationalists in the Obama administration and provide Obama and his more realistic foreign-policy advisors with the support they need to resist the interventionist impulse among Democrats. And imagine if the Town Hallers were protesting not only President Obama's healthcare reform but the attempt to secure the power of a corrupt and incompetent government in Kabul, and were demanding that Washington pursue a foreign policy that adheres to core U.S. national interests rather than the pipe dreams of the neoconservatives and neoliberals. What a difference such a form of populist opposition could make in the foreign-policy debate in Washington!

I would urge my colleagues on the anti-interventionist right to abandon their dreams of the day when the Republican elites in Washington will be forced by their conservative followers in Peoria to return to their party's roots. Most Republicans and conservatives around the country support a more militant foreign-policy approach that would require many more military adventures, regime changes, and ideological crusades to destroy the "evil ones" and ensure that the rest of the world give in to U.S. dictates and adhere to American values. While the sentiments expressed in the town-hall meetings and other forums reflect genuine libertarian concerns about the growth of government under the Obama and—let's not forget!—Bush administrations, and perhaps even some worries about the long-term threats to traditional American cultural values, that kind of populism does not extend to foreign policy. Though the majority of activists you encounter at a Ron Paul event would like to see the federal government get out of their lives and refrain from confiscating their money and guns, most of them are not really interested in foreign-policy issues and are certainly not in a position to contest the reigning Republican and conservative imperialist stance that would likely dominate the policies of many Republican administrations to come. ©

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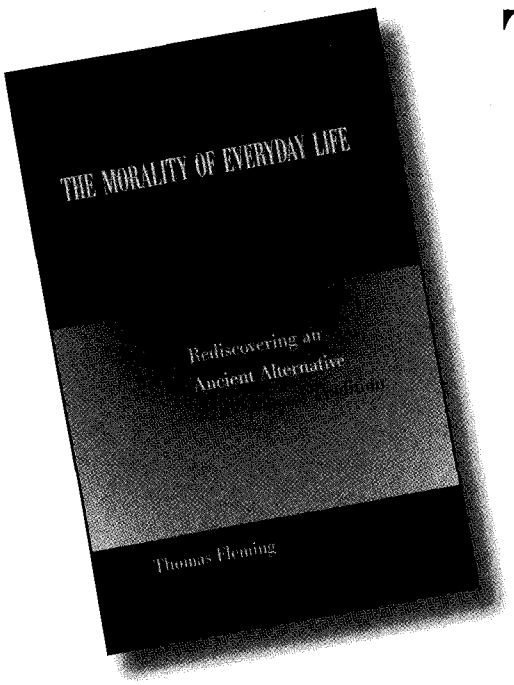

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Dissolving Britain

The Lisbon Treaty's Eurojustice

by Mary Ellen Synon

I have a picture pinned over my desk here in Brussels, a 1929 photograph—"obtained under great difficulty," the caption says—of a man being executed by guillotine at 5 A.M. on an open street in France.

The title of the picture is "Legacy of the French Revolution." I keep it because it is a modern link with an historic Continental horror. That is to say, it is a reminder, as I shift from my desk to the European Commission press briefings, of what it means to be "European."

For me the title of the picture should be "Lest We Forget." Lest we forget the culture from which the European Union springs. Lest we forget the history that has shaped Europe: the Terror, Napoleon's butchery and his civil code, the violent European revolutions, the Continental taste for coercion, the Marxist distaste for the sovereignty of the nation-state.

You may think I go too far, but the more I watch the European Union—and I've been writing about it since 1979, when I won a fellowship to study the thing—the more I understand. This Continental coalition has a flawed and bloody pedigree. It is no place for Britain, the island nation whose governments and laws spring from Magna Carta, Common Law, and the 1689 Bill of Rights.

The European Union is centralized, intolerant, antinational, single-party, elitist, undemocratic, and illiberal. It is the essence of the Continental attitude concerning the way government should function, an attitude the same now as in Napoleon's time. It is everything Britain under her own ancient constitution is not.

Yet to my anger and despair, the British are abandoning their political heritage and allowing themselves to be drawn into this.

Years of propaganda from Brussels—the Commission budget for propaganda this year alone is over $3.5 billion, all disguised as "communications"—as well as a collective loss of nerve have led Britons to accept the E.U. line: "We are all Europeans now." But Britons and Europeans are no more the same thing than Britons and Scandinavians are. We are not all Europeans now. We do not all share that shame.

Now, under a new treaty, the Lisbon Treaty, a single European state will be created. At this writing, the treaty is not yet law, but Brussels will not allow the people of Europe to refuse it. In 2005, the Dutch and the French voters rejected the text in referenda. Last year the Irish rejected it as well. So the E.U. elite simply rejected the votes. In Europe, the only vote that counts is the vote Brussels accepts. The Dutch, French, and Irish governments capitulated to this disgrace. Once the Lisbon Treaty is ratified, the European Union will become a "political entity," a country called Europe with the power to act as a sovereign state.

One of my roles is to report for British readers on just how many more constitutional powers are being surrendered to Brussels. These stories—and those of jaw-dropping E.U. waste and corruption—once provoked fury. Now, when I come across yet another nugget of outrage, I increasingly wonder, "Why bother?" I know what Europe is destroying in Britain because I see it every day. What enrages me more is the somnolence of the British. It seems no loss of sovereignty, no obscene fleecing of the taxpayers to enrich the Brussels unelected elite, will make the British wake up and roar, "Stop!"

Britain now stands to lose everything to this new European state. Most disastrous will be the loss of the ancient British system of justice.

If you can cut your way through the deliberately difficult thickets of the Lisbon Treaty, you will see that it gives the European Union control even over procedure in British courts. Article 82 grants the European Parliament and the European Council (the meetings of heads of government) the power to set down rules for legal procedures in criminal cases: "They shall concern the mutual admissibility of evidence between Member States; the rights of individuals in criminal procedure; the rights of victims of crime; any other specific aspects of criminal procedure which the Council has identified in advance by a decision."

Moreover, there is an institution called Eurojust, the E.U. "Judicial Cooperation Unit," established in 2002. I could ask 10,000 people in England if they have ever heard of Eurojust, and the answer from each would be "No." But under the Lisbon Treaty, Eurojust will gain the power to initiate investigations of British subjects and to order arrests.

The European Union presents Eurojust as a group of judges, one nominated by each member-state, whose job is to "enhance"—in the jargon of the Eurocrats, that means "take control of"—the effectiveness of the authorities in member-states when they are dealing with serious

Mary Ellen Synon is a Brussels-based journalist.

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cross-border and organized crime.

In fact, some of these "judges" are no more than retired police officers or ex-prosecutors. That means, as the membership of Eurojust now stands, a Portuguese ex-public prosecutor, a Bulgarian ex-public prosecutor, the former general prosecutor for Martinique and Guyane in the French Antilles, and a Cypriot lawyer will be given the power to decide whether a British subject faces prosecution for an alleged crime.

Under Lisbon, all British vetoes in all areas of police and judicial cooperation are to be abolished. The European Union will gain the power to define what counts as a criminal offense, including a new power to set minimum and maximum prison sentences. The treaty also allows for the creation of a European public prosecutor who could prosecute British subjects.

Then there is the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which, under Lisbon, would give the European Court of Justice jurisdiction over various criminal-justice and migration issues. This charter is a modified version of the Convention on Human Rights drawn up 60 years ago by the Council of Europe—a larger, older organization. However, Britain has already been entangled in this European Convention and its European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) for years, because all E.U. members are required to join the European Council and submit to the judgment of its court.

Last April, Lord Hoffman, Britain's second most senior law lord, published a paper in which he attacked the ECHR for its "aggrandisement" of its powers and its relentless interference in British law. He said the system of selecting the judges "lacked constitutional legitimacy."

Lord Hoffman was right to criticize the way the judges are selected. Like those of the European Court of Justice, they are men and women who may never have spent a moment as a judge before being appointed by politicians to the court. Which is quite apart from the question, Why should a Russian or a Serb or an Azerbaijani judge, or any one of the dozens of nationalities of the court, have the power to reach into British law and change it?

Yet the British submit, as they are submitting to the creation of a new European foreign minister, called the high representative, and a global E.U. diplomatic corps to direct the foreign policy to which Britain will be tied. To give you an idea of how Brussels works: The Commission has already gone ahead, at immense cost, with training more than 500 diplomats, even though this diplomatic corps can have no legal existence until the final ratification of the Lisbon Treaty.

Then there is the determination by the French and some of the other member-states to form a European army. Already the European space policy has been modified to change the Galileo global-positioning project into one capable of deploying the kind of GPS-guided artillery now being used by Americans in Afghanistan. In short, there will be an E.U. military presence in space.

There is the single currency, designed as a tool ultimately to take control of all fiscal policy within member-states.

There is the arrogance of the members of the European Parliament who bank enough money in a full term to make them euro-millionaires—and a euro-million is $1.4 million. These elitist Euro-MPs, together with their colleagues in other E.U. institutions, now control up to 80 percent of Britain's laws. Their powers are superior to Westminster's.

Above all, there is the European Commission, whose structure has been recognized by one leading former Soviet dissident as looking "exactly like the Politburo—unaccountable to anyone, not directly elected by anyone at all." Yet all European legislation originates in the Commission—much of it inspired, even drafted, by some of the thousands of unregulated lobbyists working in Brussels for multinational corporations.

Let me give you one final example of a recent European outrage that ought to be making headlines in Britain but is not.

Earlier this year, a group called the TaxPayers' Alliance uncovered a shocking secret deal struck between the Commission and Lord Mandelson, the former E.U. commissioner who left Brussels in 2008 to join Gordon Brown's cabinet. At the time this deal was uncovered, Lord Mandelson was business secretary. He is now much more than that: He is second in power only to the prime minister himself. The deal is that if Lord Mandelson criticizes E.U. institutions or policies, he could be threatened with losing his $52,000 index-linked pension as a former commissioner. (In addition to the pension from Brussels, the business secretary was in line for more than $389,000 top-up salary payments and a $25,000 "resettlement" fee for his move from Brussels to London.)

When Lord Mandelson took his cabinet seat, he did not volunteer the information that his pension may depend on his continued adherence to the Commission party line. I find it astounding that he was not forced to resign the moment the deal came to light.

Imagine, say, that the Indian steel billionaire Lakshmi Mittal had employed a politician for p.r. work for three years. Then, after the same politician left Mr. Mittal's employ to take up the job of business secretary, it came to light that Mr. Mittal had him tied to a secret $840,000 pension pot that depended on his continued support of his former employer's steel investments while acting as a minister.

This would be so alien to the British tradition of how government is conducted that it would be breathtaking. Yet the thoroughly "European" Lord Mandelson shrugs off a similar financial arrangement with the European Commission, and the so-called Official Opposition drops the issue. Lord Mandelson continues in high office, a Manchurian candidate planted by Europe. We now have a cabinet minister who is in the pay of a Continental power.

Where is the British outrage at this? Gone, like the British constitution and that poor man's head on that French street in 1929.

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by Paul Craig Roberts

Correcting a Legal Transgression

The trial was fixed. The judge knew it. The rancher had the town buffaloed. The jury would deliver the verdict the rancher wanted.

The judge was concerned that the rancher's rowdies would use the verdict for a lynching. The rancher didn't want any more nesters around. The nester's wife was a good-looking woman, and the judge worried that the rancher had ideas about her as well.

The rancher had cut the fence and run his herd over the nester's crops. Finding it hard to feed his family, a wife and two kids, the nester had killed one of the rancher's steers. The rancher had him up on rustling.

When the ranger passed through the town, the judge asked him to stay, though it meant a cold trail for the outlaw he was tracking. Nothing like a ranger on hand to prevent a lynching, and the judge made his point that forestalling a crime was better than chasing after a man who had already committed one.

The town's reverend would have liked to have stood up for the nester, but he could not. The rancher was a big donor to the church, having supplied the resources to build it. The town store was dependent on the rancher's business. The saloon didn't want any trouble. But a couple of townspeople spoke up for the nester, asking how big a crime it was to kill a steer to feed a starving family.

The answer was that if everyone was so shiftless as to live off other people's property, there would be nothing left of the country.

With this question dealt with, the next was what would become of the wife and kids if the man of the family was sent to prison. This was a touchy question. Kids have to be fed, and the town had no job for the woman. The store was run by the owner and his wife. The bank had a teller/clerk. The hotel hadn't enough customers for a full-time maid.

The general consensus was that either the rancher would get her or she would set up above the saloon to entertain the customers.

When the judge explained the situation to the ranger, the ranger was perturbed.

Rangers were hard men who had no qualms about killing outlaws and Indians, but they were protective toward women and children. That the law was being used to ruin a man and his family didn't sit well. The ranger rode for the law, but not this kind of law.

The ranger told the judge that he couldn't sit in the town forever to protect a man from lynching. The judge said the solution was for the ranger to take the nester and his family back to the state capital after the trial. There was a prison there, and the larger town provided better opportunities for the woman. The judge would write a letter to the ranger's captain explaining that he had asked the ranger to prevent a lynching and the ruination of a woman.

The ranger agreed. He was happy not to have to bring in the outlaw. The man had been pushed into crime and didn't really belong there. A fresh start, and he would come out alright.

The trial went like the judge feared it would. The jury delivered its guilty verdict while the rancher and rowdies leered at the wife.

Jaws dropped when the judge announced that the ranger would be taking the convict to the state prison and that the nester's family would be escorted to the capital.

Angry looks shot the ranger's way but were quickly arrested by the contempt in the ranger's eyes, inviting them to give him an excuse. One way for the ranger to settle this was to plug the rancher, but the rancher wanted none of it and sat on his anger. So what if he didn't get the woman? He had finished off the nester.

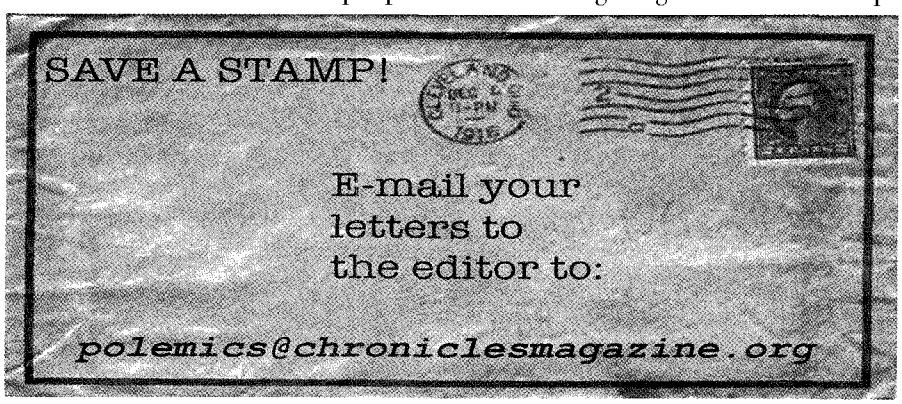
On the way back the ranger made up his mind that he was not delivering the nester to prison. He thought the judge would agree, and he worked out his story in his mind.

An attack by Comanche renegades who wanted the woman and children. Sending the family fleeing, the ranger held off the Indians. A prisoner was lost, but a family was saved.

New Orleans was a growing port, the ranger said, and there was work for stevedores.

The ranger filed his report. The captain said, "Just one thing. You must have used quite a bit of ammunition holding off those Comanches, but you didn't put in for a box of ammo."

"Oh, sure, captain," the ranger replied, "I forgot. Afraid I'm not much count at paperwork." ◁



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by Taki Theodoracopulos

Oiling Up the Wheels of Justice

He is the clown prince in a continent whose rulers boast of more clowns among them than all the circuses of the world combined. He uses more black shoe polish on his hair than a company of Rumanian hussars use on their thigh-high boots, and plasters more makeup on his face than Norma Desmond. He is, of course, Muammar Qaddafi, the Michael Jackson of pan-Arabism, and the man who just humiliated the American President, the British prime minister, and the bereaved relatives of the 270 victims of Pan Am Flight 103. Once called a "mad dog" by Ronald Reagan, he is now received as a proper head of state by cowardly lions such as the French president and the Italian prime minister and is fawned over by G-8 bureaucrooks as he swans around surrounded by 40 female bodyguards (handpicked by the chief clown) "whose otherwise generous terms of employment include a solemn vow of chastity," as the *Telegraph*'s William Langley puts it.

The lure of detonating people came home to roost for Qaddafi when his four-year-old daughter was killed in an American air raid back in 1986. Two years later came Lockerbie. It was obvious that the Mad Dog had learned nothing except that the West was weak. In 1984 Libyan so-called diplomats had shot dead a female police officer, WPC Yvonne Fletcher, as she performed her duties in St. James's Square, outside the Libyan embassy. The thugs were allowed to leave London on board a special plane sent by Qaddafi, while the Iron Lady fumed at 10 Downing Street. Such are the joys of diplomatic immunity.

No one knows for sure where the Mad Dog comes from. As Langley writes,

> His name alone makes him a Google nightmare with at least 30 different spellings: Gaddafi, Gadhafi, Kaddafi, Khadafy, Qudaffi Qadhdhafi . . . He was a man from nowhere, paranoid and unstable, who appeared to live in a tent, communing with the dunes, and emerging only occasionally to reveal that our national poet was really an Arab called Sheik Espir, or that the American Indians originated from the Yemen.
>
> Of his early life little is known, and even less is certain. He was born, it is said, in Sirte, a desert town, the son of a goatherd. Other versions suggest that his real father may have been French, and his mother Jewish. . . . Today he is the world's third longest-serving head of state. He still talks himself a big role in the world—"I am an international leader, the King of Kings of Africa and the Imam of the Muslims" . . .

He is, incidentally, a favorite son for some Israelis, because his instability confirms Likud's big lie that all Arabs are bomb throwers who like to kill Jews in their spare time. Qaddafi has six sons, one worse than the next, according to my sources, and judging by the one I met, you'd better believe it, dear reader.

Nat Rothschild, son of Lord Rothschild, threw a bash last year in his luxurious Greenwich Village townhouse in Saif Qaddafi's honor. Qaddafi was dressed like a pimp, with a Hollywood-like two-day growth and a manner to match. My first and only question was, "Are you for Abbas or Hamas?" "Hamas," he said and then walked imperiously away. The sons all live like billionaires. They fly in very large private jets, hire large yachts for their Mediterranean holidays, and are always guarded by battalions of security men who stop traffic when the boys decide to take in the sights. Which are mainly nightclubs flush with Eastern European hookers.

Although Qaddafi remains mercurial, menacing, and murderous, people such as Tony Blair and Gordon Brown have embraced him of late thanks to—yes, you guessed it—Libya's untapped oil reserves. Big Oil has declared Qaddafi a good guy, and when the oil companies speak, politicians are all ears. The latest fiasco was typical Qaddafi. Having convinced the British as well as Obama that his 42 billion barrels of proven oil reserves and 1.5 billion cubic meters of natural gas recast him as a valuable Western ally, the nod-and-wink game went into effect. Qaddafi wanted the man convicted of the Lockerbie bombing back in Libya in time for the 40th anniversary of his having seized power. Ali al-Megrahi—if he was the one responsible—was only following orders from the big man himself. The Brits decided *to hell with justice*, profits come first. Qaddafi promised Megrahi would keep a low profile. But by having my old friend Saif fly him to Libya to a hero's welcome, he rubbed the West's nose yet again in the you-know-what. The fact that everyone responsible is now screaming bloody murder is proof, to this writer, that once again the fix was in. In the meantime, the bad guy who supposedly planted the bomb did less than two weeks' time for each of his innocent victims. Big Oil wins, as does the Mad Dog.

It was a cynical deal from start to finish. In contrast to Iraq, the invasion of which Tony Blair enthusiastically supported on the flimsiest of grounds, Libya under Qaddafi not only had a long history of sponsoring terrorism but had committed numerous atrocities and political assassinations on British soil. However awful it sounds, welcome to modern Britain. ◁

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Supernova

by Derek Turner

"Nobility is the symbol of mind."

—Walter Bagehot

In Tearing Haste: Letters Between Deborah Devonshire and Patrick Leigh Fermor
edited by Charlotte Mosley
London: John Murray; 416 pp., £25

Melanie Anderson

In times of texting and sexting, Twittering and wittering, there is something positively antediluvian about epistolary collections—a whiff of fountain pens and headed notepaper, morocco-topped escritoires in long-windowed drawing rooms looking out over lawns studded with cedars and peacocks. Such fleeting evocations are lent depth and body when the letters in question have passed between lifelong friends Deborah Devonshire (now 89), last of the Mitford girls and chatelaine of Chatsworth, and Sir Patrick Leigh Fermor (94), war hero and gentleman-chronicler of an interwar, largely vanished, traditional Europe with which he lived on unusually intimate terms.

Leigh Fermor's dangerously unsettling account of his peregrinations between 1933 and 1939 (in *A Time of Gifts* and *Between the Woods and the Water*—a long-deferred third volume is hoped for anxiously by legions of Leigh Fermorians) evokes a Europe that was even then anachronistic and which has since been almost entirely swept away by war and communism, or gnawed away by the worms of globalism. Portents were present to this observant walker (at least in retrospect—*Gifts* was published in 1977 and *Woods and the Water* in 1986) as he tramped solitarily from the Hook of Holland to Constantinople, an 18-year-old romantic, amateur historian, folklorist, and philologist, carrying in his rucksack a few letters of introduction, *The Oxford Book of English Verse*, and Horace's *Odes*. He noted *flambeaux*-toting SA processions in Germany, and everywhere encroaching suburbanization and industrialization, improving transport and communications, fading folk memories, shrinking estates, shriveling patrimonies, crumbling chateaux—rumors everywhere of rationalization and reordering, dissent and diminution.

But there was time for him to sample Europe almost as if he had been a medieval traveler—in all its centuries-accreted color, ruins and runes, relicts and survivals, folk tales and prejudices, arcane wisdom and archaic dialects, intricately quartered coats of arms, unbuilt horizons, unmechanized agriculture, moonlit highways, hostels and *Schlösser*, white cathedrals and forlorn wayside shrines, churls and countesses, leprosy and libraries, wolves in the hills and giant catfish swarming in dark Danubian depths.

His evocation of an eclipsed Europe in those sometimes showy but perennially piquant books long ago made him a literary figurehead for nostalgists and would-be *Wandervögels*. Subsequent adventures have only augmented his status. Max Hastings observed in 2004 that Leigh Fermor was a man who "consciously sought Byronic experience." This may be why, in 1935, he rode with royalist cavalry putting down a republican uprising in Macedonia, and in 1944 abducted a German general and smuggled him across Crete while pursued by whole Wehrmacht divisions (which latter exploit formed the basis of the 1957 film *Ill Met by Moonlight*). He spent months in French monasteries searching for spiritual enlightenment (recorded in *A Time To Keep Silence*), climbed and delved in South America (*Three Letters From the Andes*), tried earnestly to understand the piled-up nonsense of voodoo (*The Traveller's Tree*), and wrote a lurid novel about an island's extirpation (*The Violins of Saint-Jacques*). *Philhellene non-*

Derek Turner is the editor of the Quarterly Review.

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pareil, he went on to write acclaimed books on Greece (*Mani* in 1958 and *Roumeli* in 1966) and build a house for himself and his wife, Joan (she died in 2003), on the Peloponnese at the southernmost tip of mainland Europe.

Mani contains the perfect Leigh Fermor passage—the ouzo-fueled "Byzantium Restored," a pattern-book reverie, but one rooted in reality, lush and learned, suffused with longing and full of the poetry of proper nouns, and a passage that incidentally might now be dismissed by many as "Islamophobia." (Elsewhere, Leigh Fermor explicitly bemoans the Turkish presence in Europe.) He has escaped this particular censure, although he has had a few pursed-lip critics, such as the *Times Literary Supplement*'s Mary Beard, who, in 2005, criticized his "laddish tales," "blokeish tone," "intricate and outdated disquisitions," and disdain for mass tourism.

His *In Tearing Haste* correspondent is equally beguiling. It is not just that Deborah Devonshire is a duchess, with all that dust-mote-filled word connotes, inhabiting a Wodehousian ambience of great houses and garden parties, Labradors and Purdeys, Old Masters and Gloucester Old Spots, but also because she, the last of six gilded sisters (and one brother) who alternately graced and scandalized British gossip columns from the 1920's onward, possesses all the Mitford directness and *panache*.

She is very different from, but also strangely like, her siblings—Nancy (1904-73), socialist, biographer, and author of *Love in a Cold Climate*; Pamela (1907-94), the quietest, called "the rural Mitford" by her admirer John Betjeman; Thomas (1909-45), a fascist sympathizer who refused to fight Germany but died in action against the Japanese; Diana (1910-2003), who married Sir Oswald Mosley; Unity (1914-48), a Hitlerite who tried to commit suicide upon the outbreak of war; and Jessica (1917-96), a communist who eloped to Spain during the Spanish Civil War and later became involved with the U.S. civil-rights movement, and steadfastly refused to speak to Diana in later life. Deborah's only foray into politics was as a supporter of the bland Social Democratic Party in the 1980's. She certainly did not share Unity's adoration of Hitler, whom they both met in 1937; she informed an amused *Daily Telegraph* journalist in 2007 that she would much rather have chatted with her musical idol Elvis Presley.

Deborah, fundamentally practical and outdoorsy, might have been content to have been a second "rural Mitford," but her marriage to one of Britain's leading aristocrats (Andrew, the 11th duke of Devonshire, who died in 2004) has ensured that she has been a participant in many of the great public events and private dinners of the period covered by these letters (1954-2007). She has also been instrumental in saving Chatsworth, one of England's most remarkable houses, from financial difficulties through tireless writing and merchandising—even operating a cash register in the estate's gift shop.

Her and Leigh Fermor's remembrances of some of the places, personalities, and events of those decades, which saw Britain turn from imperial power to E.U. province—Fairest Isle to Cool Britannia, workshop of the world to hedge-fund heaven, and Anglo-Celtic to multiracial—are fascinating because their authors know (or knew) "everyone" and understand the way Britain operates (or used to operate). Although essentially apolitical and sometimes even seemingly slight, these exchanges lend proportion, depth, and texture to the frequently told, but often superficial, saga of prolonged decline management.

"Debo's" letters to "Paddy" (generally shorter than his to her) are a-brim with astute, arch observations on royals, prime ministers (Harold Macmillan was a relative by marriage), presidents (she sat beside JFK during his inauguration), artists, writers, musicians, sculptors, academics, designers—as well as a bucolic cast of hunters, farmers, pig breeders, butchers, and gardeners, even horses and chickens. She writes economically but to great effect. As Leigh Fermor noted in the *Daily Telegraph* in 2000, "She writes with ease and speed, and wonders what all the fuss is about"—her facility, a source of wonderment to a notoriously painstaking writer, luring him often into capering verse and cartoons, revealing an unexpected impishness.

Her comments are often hilarious. Jackie Kennedy seems to her "a queer fish. Her face is one of the oddest I ever saw. It is put together in a very wild way." About the "Troubles" in Ireland, she writes, "I do love [the Irish] but I wish they'd stop shooting people's knees. It's such a horrid trick." She recalls a very elderly friend who spends her dotage "doing the three Rs—Reading and Remembering Rogering." Sometimes she makes penetrating points in an understated way, summing up trends and types in devastating phrases, such as when she writes of the Queen Mother's funeral:

> What a poke in the eye for the MEDIA that all those people queued night and day in the freezing wind to see the lying in state . . . we had a wonderful view of everything. Bang opposite that wretched little Prime Minster & the frightful Cherie. Prescott looks like a bare-knuckle fighter of Sackville Glove fame from the East End.

At other times, and increasingly as "the FOULNESS of old age" strikes down family and friends, the letters become "unbearable memories of the olden days." For example, on the death of Diana Mosley—for many, a monster, but for Deborah, a beloved sister—she remarks,

> It is so odd to have lost someone who was always there. The childhood cry of the seventh, straggling to keep up on stubby legs, of WAIT FOR ME, lives with me. She couldn't.

Leigh Fermor is more political. In between typically dazzling descriptions of his latest exploits, he winces at the tedious "booming" of Simone Weil and occasionally comes out with things like "The present government obviously plans to quietly [*sic*] strangle

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English history in all its aspects."

These letters (perfectly edited and annotated by Diana Mosley's daughter-in-law, and including a necessary glossary of nicknames) are not a history nor even a diary, but an enlightening account of how two twitchingly alert, highly cultured people reacted and related to a maelstrom of eccentric and brilliant relatives and friends and, beyond them, to revolutionary social upheaval.

Their letters are a window into a vanishing ambience—what Richard Davenport-Hines called "a lost world of glamour, intelligence and personal scruples." The world the two remember and regret was a small but significant planet, with a shared style, filled with in-laws and in-jokes, with common experiences and tastes, lightly sitting authority and *noblesse oblige*; its revolving cast of strong personalities viewed against a taken-for-granted cultural backdrop that gave a context to the players and grounded them in a time and place. Even "non-U" interlopers tried to be "U," ditching *serviette* in favor of *napkin* and eliminating *toilet* for *loo*, while a certain grocer's daughter from Grantham thought it necessary to exchange her flat Midlands tones for a strangulated variant of Received Pronunciation. (These days, if *Daily Mail* headlines can be relied upon, RP may sometimes be an actual drawback in some careers.)

That star so searingly recalled to life in this collection has gone supernova and is exploding indefinitely outward, its elegant cool architecture of class and control dynamited by death duties (inheritance taxes) and democracy. Its constantly changing, but curiously consistent, leadership cadre has now been almost entirely superseded by a "new aristocracy" of career politicians, celebrities, and oligarchs—a group that is looser, less rooted, less substantial, and as gauche ideologically as it is socially.

There are still generals, masters of foxhounds, clubmen, aesthetes, and Old Etonians (David Cameron, Boris Johnson, and George Osborne are all OEs), but they are no longer the default power in the land and have little context or corporate personality. The kind of houses lived in by Deborah and aspired to by Leigh Fermor are mostly now beautiful shells, with roped-off walkways along which tourists troop respectfully but bemusedly. Meanwhile, the Elizabeth Frinks have metamorphosed into Damien Hirsts, the Maurice Bowras into Terry Eagletons, the John Betjemans into Benjamin Zephaniahs, and the Benjamin Brittens into Britney Spearses.

"Dr Oblivion comes to see me a bit too often," Deborah repines in 2004. That fell practitioner has already laid low most of her classy contemporaries, leaving the field open to artists who employ used tampons in their "installations," winners of TV reality shows, surgically "enhanced" models, and highly paid politicians who use taxpayers' money to pay for nonexistent mortgages and £1.50 bath plugs. This is not to say that there are not many cultured and elegant people left in England; there are (including Deborah's children and grandchildren), but they are outnumbered, outgunned, and outflanked by the massed forces of Tedium and Ugliness. What is left behind as the high cultural tide recedes is mud, and a scrabbling mass of bores and drabs fighting for a piece of overripe pie.

Sir Patrick once recalled how, during his youthful journey across Europe, he might sleep one night in a hayrick and the next in a chateau: "I suddenly found myself in some tremendous castle with banners flying and horses galore." Modern European adventurers are more likely to bed down in chain hotels with mints on the pillow, the banners and horses available only on DVD. We have all been impoverished and diminished.

But despite what has happened to the Old Continent, and the drawbacks of postwar politicians, the knight and the duchess have at least discharged their duty, bequeathing us noble literature and a great English estate still defying England's debasement. They have also left us in these letters a memento of a mellower *modus vivendi* that in some ways is still with us (not least in the persons of these correspondents), but which in other ways has vanished as completely as the England of Emma. ◁C▷

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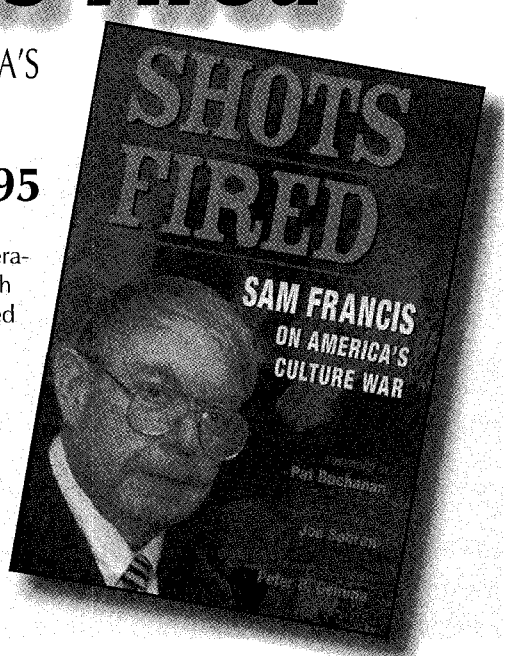
—*Aaron D. Wolf*



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Homogeneity Was Our Strength

by Matthew A. Roberts

Heroes and Cowards: The Social Face of War
by Dora L. Costa & Matthew E. Kahn
Princeton: Princeton University Press; 336 pp., $27.95

"Diversity enriches education," then-presidential-candidate Barack Obama commented in a Q&A session with *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Students should be "exposed to diversity in all its forms," and affirmative action is the vehicle to guarantee this goal. Contrary to the expectations of naive commentators who hoped we had entered a new epoch, the election of the Great Unifier has not silenced the champions of diversity but amplified them. Emboldened by the intoxication of victory, Barack Obama's followers now demand even more diversity.

Although diversity is today officially a part of the new holy trinity—along with egalitarianism and globalism—it may not be all it's cracked up to be. Robert D. Putnam, Harvard professor of public policy, published in 2007 "*E Pluribus Unum*: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century," in which he argues, based on a survey of 26,200 people in 40 American communities, that in the face of ethnic diversity people tend to "hunker down" and to "act like turtles," to distrust those around them. The more racially diverse a community is, the greater the loss of trust. Consequently, Los Angeles, "the most diverse human habitation in human history," has the lowest index of trust.

Influenced by the writings of Putnam and others, Dora L. Costa and Matthew E. Kahn, both professors of economics at UCLA, bring us *Heroes and Cowards: The Social Face of War*, a look at how diversity affects military performance. But rather than looking at contemporary trends as do other researchers, they investigate the behavior of Union soldiers during the Civil War.

Using records stored in the National Archives, the authors consider roughly 35,000 white men in 303 companies and 6,000 black soldiers in 51 companies to determine their rates of desertion and chances of survival in POW camps. Because these companies were not racially diverse—except for white officers commanding black soldiers—Costa and Kahn look at other factors contributing to diversity: ethnicity, birthplace, age, occupation, the voting tendencies of one's home county, *etc.* The results mirror Putnam's: The more diverse the company, the higher the rate of desertion; the more a POW is surrounded by people similar to him, the higher his chance of survival.

During the Civil War, roughly one out of ten Union soldiers deserted. The more homogeneous a soldier's unit, the more social pressures commanded his loyalty. As Costa and Kahn note, "Within a heterogeneous unit, there is less social integration and informal communication." The more diverse units lacked cohesion. Although certain types of white Union soldiers were more likely to desert than others (Irish- or British-born *versus* native- or German-born, draftee or substitute *versus* volunteer, illiterate *versus* literate, poor *versus* wealthy, city dweller *versus* farmer, anti-Lincoln *versus* pro-Lincoln), demographic diversity among units was the most important predictor of desertion. If all companies had been homogeneous, the data suggests, desertion rates would have been two percent rather than nine percent.

Heroes and Cowards is sprinkled with anecdotal evidence to support the claim that diversity undercut the cohesion of Union soldiers. "Life in the army was very different from life at home," wrote one. "In one place we could choose our companions and those we wished to associate with, but in the army how different." An Ohio commander petitioned to have mulattoes transferred from his regiment because they caused "great dissatisfaction among the white soldiers and [occasioned him] a great deal of trouble to keep order and quiet in the company." Amid the horrors of war, it seems, people feel most secure when surrounded by those most like them.

Similar findings hold for the chances of survival in POW camps. Because prisoners had to compete for limited resources in the camps, they were more likely to survive if they were part of a social or kin network. Looking at data from Andersonville, Costa and Kahn find that after four months only 75 percent of soldiers with fewer than ten comrades were still alive, compared with 90 percent of those with ten or more comrades. Having studied various groups of captured men, they maintain that "if all groups had 15 extra men of the same ethnicity and company with them, the effects on survival probabilities would have been substantial."

Although any substantive work that questions the dogma of diversity is welcome, *Heroes and Cowards* is not without its shortcomings. First, the authors possess an overwhelming pro-Union bias, at one point going so far as to compare Confederate prison guards to Nazis. Although Costa and Kahn admit that "few white soldiers claimed to fight primarily for the abolition of slavery," they nevertheless superimpose a moral dimension on the war, one of "liberty against despotism." Quoting Victor Davis Hanson (whose last name they misspell), the authors paint the war as a moral crusade, noting that democracies can "produce the most murderous armies from the most unlikely of men, and do so in the pursuit of something spiritual rather than the mere material."

Furthermore, the authors seem undeterred by their own findings. Having just completed a book showing the pitfalls of diversity, they repeatedly claim that these exist only in the short term, not the long run. In other words, given another century and several trillion dollars more, diversity may still work out. Indeed, Costa and Kahn end their work with an homage to diversity, offering the blanket statement that people can better learn in diverse settings and lamenting that

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students in nondiverse dormitories are less likely to support affirmative-action policies. These lines recall Barack Obama's answer in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*—and they ignore their own demonstration that the U.S. Army was at its strongest when it was the least diverse.

Heroes and Cowards confirms what common sense suggests. In the surreal age of political correctness, it is noteworthy that an empirical study must be done to prove what military leaders have known all along.

Matthew A. Roberts writes from Kansas City, Missouri.

A Gentleman's Badges

by Catharine Savage Brosman

Beaumarchais: A Biography
by Maurice Lever; translated from the French by Susan Emanuel
New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux; 432 pp., $35.00

"Truth is stranger than fiction." This commonplace is abundantly illustrated by the life of Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais (1732-99), the young Paris watchmaker who is most famous for his plays *The Barber of Seville* and *The Marriage of Figaro*. From the facts of his extraordinary career, more than one lively novel could be drawn, including a picaresque tale. He was a successful entrepreneur and merchant-ship negotiator, an author and composer, a publisher (the Kehl edition of Voltaire's collected works), a pioneering champion of authors' rights, a government agent (and sometime spy), a vigorous supporter of the young American republic—and, yes, a lover. His ventures, adventures, vigor, and inventiveness could, if transposed into fiction, easily strain credence. As it is, readers will be amazed by the enormous range of his undertakings. "If time were measured by the events that fill it," he wrote, "I have lived two hundred years."

The present volume is a condensation as well as translation of the three-volume original biography (1999-2004) by Maurice Lever, a biographer and literary historian specializing in 17th- and 18th-century topics. Shortly after Lever's death in 2006, his widow, Evelyne, began a redaction, intending to make the work suitable for translation and publication in America. It is not clear whether that version was completed; in any case, the translator, Susan Emanuel, notes that she "modified considerably" Evelyne Lever's selection of material. The book is organized along chronological lines, but, on the pattern of many historical studies, different "theatres" (the word is apt) of the subject's most momentous decades are treated in separate chapters. This arrangement leads to occasional backtracking but causes no difficulty. The book is basically straightforward and does not play games with readers; it is suitable for leisure hours, one or two chapters at a time.

Among 18th-century French authors, Beaumarchais can be ranked, with Montesquieu, just below Voltaire, Diderot, and the disturbed genius Rousseau. He was extraordinarily talented in various fields and had other advantages: a supportive father and sisters; good looks; a lively personality and enormous charm (to which women were particularly susceptible); tremendous energy; self-confidence; ambition and the willingness to face obstacles—including drawn-out litigation, mostly initiated by him—and to endure hardship in order to advance. Lest he appear an egomaniac, one must stress his concern for others, his deep belief in justice, and his energetic commitment to righting wrongs. He was strikingly generous: He gave liberally to the neighborhood poor, founded a charity for destitute nursing mothers, and sacrificed time and expense to achieve legal protection of intellectual property. In the most complicated negotiation of his career—the affair of the Dutch rifles—he risked great sums, enormous time, and his personal reputation and welfare in the effort to procure, though legal means, weapons for the new French republic. He endured imprisonment and, even worse, repeated crossings, sometimes lasting several days, of the English Channel, during which he experienced violent seasickness. The man's perseverance was partly self-serving; still, it is astonishing.

His plebeian origins (he was born simply Caron) and the affair of the Dutch rifles notwithstanding, Beaumarchais did not give unqualified support to the French Revolution as it unfolded. A self-proclaimed friend of liberty and champion of self-made men, he recognized nonetheless the legitimacy of hierarchies and had tastes that would now be called elitist. He had begun his career as a purveyor of fine timepieces (incorporating improvements of his devising) to Louis XV, his family, and others at court. He then became a music master, teaching the harp to the monarch's daughters. Obviously, he had none of the widespread loathing among the lower classes for anything resembling authority or superiority. Aspiring to higher rank, he acquired "de Beaumarchais" through his first wife, who had inherited a property by that name; he later bought a patent as secretary to the king, which conferred the first degree of nobility. With the enormous wealth he eventually acquired, he designed and built a superb Paris residence, with gardens, right across from the Bastille. Even before July 1789, he feared the crowds in his neighborhood. He was an early critic of revolutionary excesses, expressing dismay at the "brigands who burn châteaux" and "call that freedom." Fundamentally, he was a partisan of order and justice, and admired Louis XVI (who comes off generally well here). "I am the friend of order and good rules," Beaumarchais wrote. "To criticize and indict some laws is not to overthrow all laws."

His repeated and prolonged sufferings at the hands of republican authorities show how they viewed him as suspect, probably a royalist sympathizer. He was harassed and impris-

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oned; he was ultimately proscribed as an émigré and thus placed under death sentence; at one point a mercenary was sent to assure that he would not make it back alive from Holland to France. Funds he had spent on the republic's behalf were not repaid; his fine house was confiscated after having been repeatedly placed under seals; and, worst of all, his wife, daughter, and sister were persecuted. Through all this, Beaumarchais remained an optimist, never abandoning his belief that some men, at least, were honest, that justice would ultimately prevail, and that, the die having been cast and the monarchy overthrown, an enduring republic could be properly established in France as in America. And he retained his belief, expressed by Figaro, in what is now called meritocracy.

Various aspects of the historical period receive considerable attention—the courts of Louis XV and Louis XVI, the stage and actors, opera, political and economic matters, the American uprising and war against England, British-French rivalry, the inside workings of European diplomacy, and, of course, the Revolution of 1789 and subsequent events. Mozart, Benjamin Franklin, Danton, Diderot, Lafayette, Napoleon, and others of note make their appearance.

It must be emphasized that this study in its condensed form is not a probing, critical biography comparable to Arthur M. Wilson's massive study of Diderot. Nor does it have all the scholarly apparatus furnished in Lever's original, which most readers will not miss. There are a few scanty discursive footnotes, occasionally repetitious, but others would have been useful for an English-language readership; for instance, many Americans are unlikely to identify "the Soubise" (a Paris residence) or to know that Savoyards (identified tardily) were itinerant entertainers. If, however, one approaches the book as a grand adventure story, puzzling details can simply be passed over.

It is somewhat harder to overlook the shortcomings in the translation. There are errors in grammar of the sort made by play-by-play and "color" men on NFL broadcasts: "If it was . . . " (in a contrary-to-fact statement), "whom some people believe was . . . ," "to whomever wants to hear it," "stronger than me . . . " Some errors may be misprints (*wondered* for *wandered*); but the verb form *hung* is used twice for *hanged* (by the neck). There are numerous gallicisms, which may puzzle readers; *ignore* for *be unaware of* is a classic student's mistake. Apparently, the translator did not reflect that in English, unlike French, the redundant pronoun *me* is not used with *I*, and that an indefinite article is required with an unmodified noun in apposition, as in "Lheureux, a member of . . . " and a definite article with a modified apposed noun: "Lheureux, the minister of justice . . . " Occasional British terms attract attention (for instance, *stalls* as applied to theatre seating). The strangest mistake may be the phrase "The poor family is wandering and thorn . . . " (for *forlorn*?). Like ants and termites, errors do have a way of getting in, to be sure; but combing and recombing the text should eliminate most. The Index has numerous errors, such as "Comédiens-Française." An observation is in order concerning the elder Crébillon (Prosper Jolyot) and his son, Claude: Prosper was the tragedian; Claude the author of libertine tales. It is probably the latter, not the man identified as a tragedian, whom the biographer had in mind in linking him with Choderlos de Laclos (*Les Liaisons dangereuses*).

Evelyne Lever calls Emanuel "a magnificent translator." Perhaps she had in mind the liveliness of the text. This liveliness is likely owing to the French original and, ultimately, to the subject's character; it would be a dull biographer who could make the life of Beaumarchais boring. In any case, Madame Lever is not an American reader and probably did not observe the errors noted above. From Emanuel, a professional translator, I hope for better work in the future. Ultimately, the publisher is responsible for its product; I have written before in these pages, and shall state again, that expert copyeditors should be assigned to all such works before they hit the bookstores. I do not mean to be unkind. But how can publishers, editors, and others know what we want if we do not tell them?

That being said, it is fitting to add a recommendation. The volume provides hours of interesting reading and much information; yet the details do not overwhelm the narrative. The complex dealings between Beaumarchais and the United States are of particular interest. That his large loans were inspired in part by his hope of establishing commercial enterprises in America does not detract from the tremendous, indeed essential, benefit those enterprises provided. The wilful refusal of Congress, for decades, to compensate his heirs in entirety is deplorable.

A warning: In letters quoted *in extenso*, there is considerable explicit language. Beaumarchais was, after all, French, in the century in which many raised eroticism to an art, and to be a libertine was a gentleman's badge.

Catharine Savage Brosman is Chronicles' *poetry editor.*

Kultur Ohne Gott

by Francis Phillips

A Postcard From the Volcano
by Lucy Beckett
San Francisco: Ignatius Press;
520 pp., $19.95

I began this novel, set in Germany between the two world wars, after watching *Valkyrie*. I found the film both shallow and grandiose, dominated by clicking heels and clashing chords; the choice of Tom Cruise to play Claus von Stauffenberg was singularly inept. Cruise is a Hollywood celebrity; the personality of Stauffenberg—an aristocrat, soldier, and man of great personal charisma, with a deep love of his country and a foreboding about the destructive path it was being led down by Hitler—van-

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ished amid the heroics.

However, the novel returned me to the real world, the world that would have been familiar to Stauffenberg, who was born in 1907 into the Catholic nobility of south Germany and who contemplated a career in music before deciding to join his family's regiment. Lucy Beckett places her story in the Silesian countryside and in Breslau. Her main character is Count Max von Hofmannswaldau, half-Jewish, half-Protestant, born in 1905 and raised on a Silesian country estate, which he leaves for the Breslau Gymnasium to continue his studies. Here he makes friends with Adam, Count Zapolski, a Pole and lapsed Catholic, and comes under the benign influence of the classics master Dr. Alois Fischer.

Later, at Breslau University, the two young men, now studying law, include Baron Joachim von Treuberg, the son of an East Prussian *Junker*, in their circle. Treuberg is studying medicine, and he introduces his friends to a fellow medical student, Jacob Halperin, a Jew from Vilna, and his sister Anna. Music is intrinsic to their lives. Max and Jacob play the violin, Joachim the cello, and Anna the viola. They form a quartet. Later, as the political situation in Germany darkens and the students struggle between the prejudices of their background and their own idealistic instincts, it provides a common language: "If music can't break down the walls of suspicion, what can?"

Max had imbibed the music of Bach and the related values of "faith, patience, hard work" at the hands of his childhood tutor, Dr. Mendel, a Jew. Later, he is exposed to Wagner and recognizes with disquiet the music's direct assault on his senses. The specter of Nietzsche also haunts this unstable German society. As Beckett reminds us, "If God is dead, he has never been alive." Yet God had not died, despite the Nazi wish to entomb Him, though the forces of evil will have their day: Mendel eventually commits suicide, and nemesis will also overtake the group of serious-minded companions. Adam returns to his faith and to Poland, where he is tortured and killed by the Russians. Treuberg (as with Stauffenberg in real life) is executed by the SS in 1944 for his suspected part in the July Plot. Jacob Halperin, now a doctor and soldier in the Polish army, is shot in Katyn Forest, and his sister is murdered by the SS in Lithuania. Only Max survives, with the painful burden of his memories; he flees to England in 1933, when Hitler becomes chancellor, to earn his living as a private tutor and violin teacher.

The book is essentially a novel of ideas, developing in fictional form what Lucy Beckett explored in depth in her study of Western literature, *In the Light of Christ*. All the questions she raises in that earlier work concerning the relationship between Christianity and culture are here given urgent practical application. Goethe, whose spirit was meant to inform the fledgling Weimar Republic created in the chaotic aftermath of the Great War, had believed that "he who possesses art and science has religion." As the thuggish Brownshirts increase in influence, the Centre Party weakens, antisemitism grows, and the Nazis and Communists struggle for power, the inescapable conclusion is that "Culture instead of God . . . it hasn't worked."

Max describes Berlin to Adam as "Sex, whisky and money." This is the artistic decadence conjured up by Christopher Isherwood and the film *Cabaret*, as the moral collapse of the German middle classes is chronicled in memoirs such as *The Himmler Brothers*. Himmler's father had been head of the famous Wittelsbacher Gymnasium in Munich and was, like Dr. Fischer, a classical scholar. Unlike Beckett's schoolmaster, he became an enthusiastic Nazi—as did many German Catholics, believing fascism preferable to communism. Beckett chooses to situate her novel within an aristocratic elite. Why? Perhaps because their ancient, privileged status allows her to discuss the sacrificial qualities of true leadership. Dr. Fischer tells his class, "If democratic government is to work in Germany, we must have good people who are also clever and brave, to take responsibility."

The author's grasp of the intricacies of German politics is masterly. The novel opens in 1914; the wounds caused by the Great War fester throughout the years that ensue. Beckett makes a good case for why the army commanders followed Hitler's military folly for so long; Max's father tells his son that "the Prussian nobility will never, never accept [the Treaty of Versailles], nor will the Prussian army." His brother, Heinrich, shocks him by joining the SS officer corps. Max wonders, "Could this be what Prussian military honour and obedience had become?"

The most interesting character in the book is Adam, Max's friend, who constantly argues against belief in God in Dr. Fischer's classes. Affecting a youthful cynicism, he dominates the less worldly Max with his wider reading, his musical gifts, and his charm. Returning to Cracow, he happens to hear a sermon by the (real-life) Prince-Archbishop Sapieha; in a dramatic *volte-face*, he becomes a priest. Faced by the false religion of the Nazis, he chooses Christ alone.

Through her vivid evocation of the doomed lives of a group of high-minded, highly educated young people, Beckett's novel charts the collapse of a whole civilization. *A Postcard From the Volcano* raises questions of enduring importance. At its conclusion I felt acute sadness for the loss of a generation, both real and imagined.

Francis Phillips writes from Buckinghamshire, England.

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by Joe Ecclesia

Adventurous

Your Excellency:

October and November in these mountains often seem to me a time of melancholy and bereavement, of Demeter grieving the loss of Persephone, the good earth receding into itself. In *Look Homeward, Angel*, Thomas Wolfe, who grew up less than a mile from here, and who lies buried around the corner, connected October, the month in which his brother Ben died, with mortality and the tomb: "we shall not come again. We never shall come back again. It was October, but we never shall come back again."

My melancholic mood today brought to mind another piece of writing, an essay from *With Love and Prayers*. Here F. Washington Jarvis, an Anglican priest who for many years served as headmaster of Boston's Roxbury Latin School, recounts the story of another headmaster approached by a mother about the direction of her son's education:

> "Are you preparing Henry for a political career?" she asked Alington.
>
> "No," he said.
>
> "Well, for a professional career?"
>
> "No," he replied.
>
> "For a business career, then?"
>
> "No," he repeated.
>
> "Well, in a word, Dr. Alington, what are you here at Eton preparing Henry for?"
>
> "In a word, madam? Death."

Despite our lust for violence and death in the movies, many Americans don't handle death well, particularly when we contemplate our own demise. I'm not even sure whether many of us would understand all the ramifications of Dr. Alington's comment: to discern, and then to live, a noble life, to recognize unflinchingly that this life will end, to seek a good death.

Our Catholic Faith goes to great lengths to succor the dying and their loved ones. The Sacrament of Confession allows us at our own death to meet our Lord in a spirit of reconciliation. The Sacrament of the Sick helps us greet death not as some obscene adversary, but as the gatekeeper to a new land. With Her understanding of the communion of saints, the Church encourages prayers for the souls of the dead, reassuring us that such communication, so strange to the understanding of some of our Protestant cousins, possesses an efficacy extending beyond the grave. We remember our dead at every Mass, and though we don't celebrate the Day of the Dead with chocolate skulls and picnic lunches like our Mexican kin, we nonetheless set aside November 2 as All Souls Day, when we recollect the departed with special prayers.

Of course, Alington clearly had more than sacraments in mind when uttering his acerbic comment. He meant, I think, that he was teaching his young charges how to die by teaching them how to live. Would not the man who has lived truly be prepared to face the reality of death? Here, too, the Church offers guidance and help, having spoken through her saints, philosophers, and theologians about the good life, a life centered not only on rectitude but on a deep and abiding joy.

One of your priests, Fr. Ray Williams, understands this idea, this joy found in a rollicking Catholic life. He has encouraged parishioners to explore the fullness of Catholic living, to seek out the pleasures provided by marriage, love, sports, and true leisure. By hiking, reading great books, cooking delicious meals, and drinking rich red wine, Father Williams inspires his parishioners and spreads his enthusiasm for these passions among the young.

Some priests, however, overlook the encouragement and direction their parishioners need in this area. Our Church excels in urging charity for the poor, justice for the oppressed, and love for our neighbors, and these are indeed all worthy goods deserving of our attention, yet have we not in some way lost sight of the needs of parishioners themselves? Why do we hear so few sermons promoting the joys—and yes, the sheer adventure—of living life to the hilt as Catholics? We find such enthusiasm for the Catholic way in the saints, men and women living and dead whose lives shine like lights in the darkness for the rest of us, yet how much greater might the impact of our Faith be if we became lights ourselves, if we understood how Christian prayer, precept, and practice can change the way we see our world, how such a sense of adventure can convert this old, beaten-up globe, what Hopkins called "seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil" into a palette of vibrant colors?

Perception transforms us. Interpretation colors reality. Once, an English mother on holiday with her daughter missed the train that would take them on the next leg of their journey. The little girl burst out crying. "Our trip is ruined," she said.

"Quite the contrary, dear," her mother said, brushing away her daughter's tears. "Our trip just became an adventure."

From what I know of you, Your Excellency, you clearly live each day as an adventure in faith. I pray that you and your good priests find a way to inspire adventure in the rest of us.

To the hilt,

Joe Ecclesia

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by Scott P. Richert

Coming Home

"The people who go to St. Stan's aren't Polish; they're Polish-American." Those words, blurted without thinking, have haunted me for almost a decade and a half. Anna Mycek-Wodecki, then art director of *Chronicles*, was a true Pole. Like Leopold Tyrmand, the founder of *Chronicles*, she was a refugee from communism. Unlike Tyrmand, she was ethnically Polish, and a Catholic. She had been surprised to learn that this new employee with the German last name was a Polish Catholic, too, and she took me under her wing.

But when I asked Anna if she attended St. Stanislaus Kostka on the southeast side of Rockford, she did not disguise her disdain. St. Stan's was established in 1912, but more recent Polish immigrants, even those who had become American citizens, were of a different breed from the Polish-Americans who had been here for several generations.

When I gently reminded Anna that, as a fourth-generation Pole in America, my experience was more like that of the Polish-Americans at St. Stan's than like hers, she arched an eyebrow, and a wry, sad smile spread across her face. There wasn't much more for either of us to say that day.

The vast majority of Poles had immigrated to the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and they—we—were thoroughly "Americanized" between the two world wars. And Americanization really meant stripping recent immigrants (and their children even more so) of their European national identities, while substituting a vague American nationalism—God, Mom, apple pie, hot dogs, and capitalism—in its place. Thus, by the middle of the 20th century, most Polish-Americans were no longer truly Polish, but not much more American than any other ethnic group that had been convinced to give its assent to the "proposition nation."

Not long after that first conversation with Anna, my wife and I went to St. Stan's for Sunday Mass. The physical attributes and speech patterns ("youse guys") of the parishioners were familiar, but the Mass was no different from most others offered across the United States that day—a mix of Marty Haugen music, handshakes, and *aye-mens*. We found our home with the Institute of Christ the King and the traditional Latin Mass, and only went to St. Stan's every year in mid-August for their annual Polish Fest.

The neighborhood in which St. Stan's sits is no longer predominantly Polish. In the 1960's and 70's, the second- and third-generation Polish-Americans who could get out did, replaced by blacks and, more recently, Hispanic and Asian immigrants. Yet the houses nearest the church always looked different—well cared for, with immaculately groomed lawns, vegetable gardens, carefully pruned plum and apple trees, and a shrine to the Blessed Virgin in the corner of the yard.

And I had no doubt what I would find if I were to go into the garages or basements—the rows upon rows of immaculately preserved, well-oiled tools that Walt Kowalski, Clint Eastwood's character in the recent film *Gran Torino*, accumulated over a half-century in a neighborhood in Detroit not much different from the neighborhood around St. Stan's. Walt reminds me of my mother's brother and what I remember of her father, and while *Gran Torino* begins with the funeral of Walt's wife, Dorothy, we learn enough about her to know that she would have fit in well with my grandmother and her Polish ladyfriends—devoted to the Church, a good housekeeper, always ready, willing, and happy to cook for her husband and children and grandchildren.

None of this, of course, is specifically Polish, or even Polish-American; but as *Gran Torino* painstakingly (and painfully) shows, much of it has been lost as succeeding generations have succumbed to the worst aspects of American "culture." Walt's two sons have moved out of the neighborhood into the suburbs; they work in sales, rather than in the Ford plant where Walt toiled for 40 years; their children are spoiled and pierced and lazy. Small wonder that, when Walt reluctantly befriends his new Hmong neighbors, he finds that "I have more in common with a bunch of gooks than with my own children."

The Hmong have their own problems, of course, especially a culture of violence that threatens to destroy what the better among them hope to build, and Walt has to teach a young Hmong some of the very lessons that his own sons did not learn. Yet one theme of *Gran Torino* is very clear: The loss of historical memory goes hand-in-hand with the destruction of the bonds between generations and the decline of civilization. And no country has been more successful in destroying the historical memory of its citizens than the United States. Communism was bitter medicine, but the spoonful of honey offered by mid-century American nationalism and prosperity made it easier to swallow the pill.

In the end, Walt finds his salvation in a return to the Church and makes a sacrifice that his Polish ancestors—and more recent Polish immigrants, who grew up under communism—would have understood, but his thoroughly American children and grandchildren probably never will.

There are those who understand instinctively what Walt Kowalski had to learn at great cost. In 1972, at the very

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time when Polish-Americans were fleeing the neighborhood around St. Stan's for the suburbs, Lady Blanka A. Rosenstiel founded the American Institute of Polish Culture (AIPC) and, five years later, the Chopin Foundation of the United States. Both organizations have similar aims: "to share with American society the heritage of Poland, which has contributed in many ways to Western civilization," and "to promote the scientific and artistic endeavors of Polish-Americans."

Born in Warsaw, Mrs. Rosenstiel emigrated to the United States in 1956. A trained artist, she understands the role that the visual arts and music play in maintaining and transmitting civilization. Through AIPC and other endeavors, she has supported Polish film, poetry, music, and radio and television programs, and made them available to a wider American audience.

Perhaps her most important efforts, though, have been in her support for the translation and publication of works of Polish history, which have provided Polish-Americans with a connection to their homeland that goes beyond kielbasa, pierogi, gołabki, and polka. The translation of Jan Dobraczynski's *Meetings With the Madonna*, co-published by AIPC and Warsaw-based Polonia Publishers, recounts the remarkable history of the Miraculous Icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa, the Black Madonna traditionally attributed to the hand of St. Luke and time after time credited with saving Poland from foreign invaders. Pope John Paul II's pilgrimage to the icon at Jasna Góra in 1979 set into motion the events that led to the founding of Solidarity and the collapse of the Polish communist regime.

While many Polish-Americans cheered on Solidarity and felt pride in the election of the Polish pope and, later, of Lech Wałesa as president of a newly free Poland, there was still something of a disconnect between their history as Poles and their history as Americans. In my first year in Rockford, I watched in horror as a local newscaster, trying to explain why schools in Illinois are closed for Casimir Pulaski Day (the first Monday of March), declared that the Polish-born calvary officer was a "Revolutionary War hero from Northern Illinois." Why else would we celebrate Pulaski's life? Surely not because, outside of Warsaw, Chicago has the largest population of Poles in the world.

Such historical ignorance makes all the more valuable other publications of AIPC, including Arthur L. Waldo's *True Heroes of Jamestown*, which details the long history of English relations with Poland in the centuries before the colonization of America, and the role that Poles played in the history of the Jamestown Colony. Capt. John Smith, taken prisoner of war while fighting against the Turks, was sold into slavery among the Tartars. Escaping, he traveled through Russia and Poland, before returning to Transylvania and, from there, to England. It was Smith who convinced the London Company to drop its "all-English Colony" slogan and to invite Poles to Jamestown, where the first arrived in 1608. Loyal to Smith, they returned to London when he did in 1609, but came back to Jamestown in 1610, where they were joined by other Poles over the next decade.

The history of Poles in the Americas was not confined to the future United States, as *Polish Contributions to Latin American Culture*, another AIPC volume, edited by Edmund S. Urbanski, shows. All of this might have been lost to the ages were it not for the dedication of Lady Blanka Rosenstiel, her love for her homeland, and her desire to revive a similar love in her fellow Polish-Americans.

Still, while such efforts are necessary and commendable, can they, by themselves, turn Walt Kowalski's sons into Walt Kowalski? That is the question that all Americanized ethnic groups face. And if the answer is no, what hope is there for future generations?

A penchant for pessimism is as ingrained in the Polish character as a love for sauerkraut and garlicky sausage. And yet, over the past five years at St. Stan's Polish Fest, I have seen more and more reason to hope. Immigration, both from the Polish community in Chicago and from Poland herself, has changed the character of the parish. The festival has grown larger every year—and more Polish. A few years ago, we began hearing more people speak Polish on the festival grounds; this year, as we watched a performance by a Polish dance company from Chicago, Polish was as common as English, and even the Polish-American polka band that followed performed a majority of songs in Polish. In the parish's long-shuttered school, the Nicholas Copernicus Polish Language School now offers lessons for children in preschool up to eighth grade (with plans to expand to twelfth) and for adults.

The changes are reflected inside the church as well. The bulletin is now bilingual, and the execrable *Gather* "hymnals" are nowhere to be found, replaced by a Polish lectionary and hymnal published in 1998 by the Catholic University of Lublin, Poland.

The opening procession on the day of the festival includes beautiful handmade banners, with Polish inscriptions, of the men's Holy Name Society, the women's Altar Rosary Society, and a Divine Mercy Society. Children dressed in traditional costume join the procession, and the offertory includes baked (leavened) bread, flowers, and other fruit of the earth, as well as the unleavened hosts and the wine.

The side altars in the church have been redone, with woodwork to match the high altar, and now feature stunningly beautiful icons of the Divine Mercy and Our Lady of Czestochowa. Much or all of this has been the work of the current pastor, Fr. Peter Sarnicki, a young, dynamic, thoroughly orthodox Polish Franciscan. He and his fellow Franciscan friars sport crew cuts and physiques like Marines, and they have been known to drink a beer or three and dance a polka on the day of the Polish Fest.

Still, the people who go to St. Stan's aren't Polish; they're Polish-American. But like *Gran Torino*'s Walt Kowalski, and like their ancestors down through the centuries, they may have rediscovered the true source of the strength of their nation just at the moment when it looked as if all had been lost. ©

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Letter From Spain

by Brooke Cadwallader

Equality Takes a Beating

Several weeks ago I was watching a program on the BBC called *Would You Risk Your Own Life to Save a Complete Stranger?* In Britain, few people apparently would. Far more common is the story of a young girl who was beaten severely in a London subway by several "youths." The attack took place on a crowded commuter line filled with grown-ups who stood by, watched, and did absolutely nothing.

Similarly, last year in Spain a female university student was badly beaten by her male schoolmates in the presence of a fairly large group of her friends, which included many boys. Once again, nobody intervened.

Not long ago boys (let alone men) were expected to be gallant to those of the opposite sex. Boys who did not behave according to this code were considered unmanly and would have to live with that stain forever.

Reports of violence against women all over the world make it clear how things have changed. It would appear that women are being killed by men in record numbers, and even by other women, and now women are being beaten up in public or even killed in public, in front of disinterested and no longer chivalric men.

This brings us to Saturday, August 2, 2008, when Dr. Jesús Neira, a Spanish university professor, stopped at a gas station in Majadahonda, a Madrid suburb, then headed toward a nearby hotel with his son to take refreshments. Neira saw, on the street by the hotel and in plain view of the public, a man whom he believed to be assaulting a slightly built young woman. Neira yelled at the man, whose name was Antonio, to stop treating the girl (who turned out to be Antonio's girlfriend) in such a rough manner. According to Neira, his precise words were "*No es de hombres golpearle a una mujer.*" ("It is unmanly to strike a woman.") He advised Antonio that he would call the police, after which Neira turned and walked into the hotel, presumably to do just that. Antonio, incensed and, according to certain testimony, on drugs, reportedly charged after Neira and knocked him flat on his back. The closed-circuit TV videos from the hotel (posted on the web) seem to indicate that Neira was struck, while flat on the ground, again by his assailant. This likely explains why he fell into a coma a few days later.

Antonio, the accused assailant, was arrested some days after the incident and charged with attempted homicide. At the end of May 2009, Antonio's petition for temporary release was denied, and he sits in jail awaiting trial. Violeta, Antonio's girlfriend, has staunchly denied that, on the day in question, she was a victim of any violent behavior at the hands of Antonio. She insists that she was in no danger and that if Neira had not intervened he would not have ended up in the hospital. These declarations have resulted in much acrimony between the Neira family and Violeta and her father. Violeta has appeared several times on Spanish television, defending her version of this incident. In the face of hostile TV hosts and journalists who have turned these appearances into shouting matches where Violeta generally stands alone against a backdrop of insults, derision, and uproar emanating from an audience that appears to loathe her, she has claimed repeatedly to be the victim of a public lynching by the media.

Neira, on the other hand, suffered grave complications, and for several months his very life hung in the balance. Contrary to the expectations of many, he survived his long ordeal and was eventually allowed to return home after two months in a coma and a total of eight months in the hospital. He has since had a pacemaker installed. Meanwhile, the story attracted tremendous attention all over Spain, turning Neira into a Spanish national hero, with wings of school buildings named in his honor. Professor Neira has received many honors, one of which is Madrid's *Medalla al Mérito Ciudadano* (Medal for Civil Merit), and he was presented with an award by Bibiana Aído, the Socialist minister of equality. Neira has signed a contract to appear as cohost of a leading morning television program. Additionally, he has accepted the post of president of the Consejo Asesor del Observatorio Regional de la Violencia de Género, a type of advisory council on matters relating to sexual violence.

At the official launching of a book honoring Neira's heroic actions, the guests of honor were his wife, Isabel; the president of the Community of Madrid, Esperanza Aguirre; and Socialist Minister of Equality Bibiana Aído, whose own office contains a subdepartment dedicated to the problem of sexual violence. The proceeds from the book will be applied toward the cause. In the book Neira is quoted as saying that men should always show deference toward women, that violence committed by men against women is moral ugliness itself, "the ugliness which makes horrible the soul of monstrous beings." Speaking at the launching ceremony, Esperanza Aguirre declared that Neira simply was not capable of turning his back on a situation in which he believed a woman was being endangered by a man. Neira's action was no mere coincidence but the consequence of his personal philosophy and his outlook on life. Aguirre went on to emphasize that Neira is an exemplar of the way one should behave when faced with violence *against the weak*.

Aguirre undoubtedly spoke the truth, though she might have inadvertently revealed more than she had intended. Certainly, Aguirre is admitting here that, in the area of fighting and physical strength, women are inferior to men; in other words, that they are weaker. Obvious, yes, but po-

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litically incorrect, and the Ministry of Equality will certainly not act on this assumption.

Of course, this whole issue of sexual violence should not be placed under the Ministry of Equality at all, since the stipulations of the new law against sexual violence (*la Ley Integral contra la Violencia de Género*) are based on an assumption of inequality. This law is being applied in the sense of *discriminación positiva*, which is best translated as "reverse discrimination" or what is opaquely called affirmative action in the United States. According to Spain's leading socialist daily, *El País*, aggression committed by a man against a woman will be treated as a far more serious offense than if a man were the victim of the same type of violence. What would be a misdemeanor if committed against a man could be judged a felony if committed by a man against a woman. In Spain, pompous proclamations to the contrary notwithstanding, not all individuals are equal before the law. But then, progressives have never believed in such a thing. Nor have radical feminists, since special-interest groups seldom if ever are satisfied with a tie: They want to win.

Gonzalo Fernández de la Mora, the eminent director of the fine Spanish conservative intellectual journal *Razón Española*, has, in a personal communication to me, given valuable insight into the background and character of his friend Jesús Neira. He describes Neira as a man of "profoundly conservative thought" and as one of the most chivalrous men he has ever known, a

> prototype of the 19th-century gentleman, a human type now practically extinct. Very probably this same chivalrousness was what impelled him to defend a woman being attacked, something that, in the Spain of today, practically nobody else would have done.

Dr. Neira has suggested that an essential element in the prevention of violence against women should be the proper education of children. Too often, he sees young boys treat young girls as if those girls were merely other boys; they must be instructed to treat girls with greater deference and respect. Laudable sentiments these, but progressives will do nothing of the sort.

At the launching of the book on Neira, Equality Minister Aído lavishly praised his actions in the defense of women at risk and pledged to make sexual violence one of the top priorities of her ministry. If she is serious about this, she will be forced to undertake measures that may be deemed politically incorrect. It turns out, for instance, that among immigrant groups the incidence of sexual violence is disproportionately high. Apparently, Minister Aído herself is aware of this problem, for she said on Spanish national radio that the relevant statistics have risen alarmingly in recent years. In 2004, 22 percent of reported sexual violence involved immigrants, a percentage far greater than that of immigrants in the country. In the first 11 months of 2008, that figure rose to 45 percent.

ACAIP, the Spanish syndicate of prisons, has reported that the percentage of immigrants in Spanish prisons has risen by 228 percent in the last ten years and that 35 percent of the present prison population is foreign born. If this trend continues, by next year half of Spain's prisoners will be foreign. A professor of sociology at a prominent Spanish university and consultant on the law against sexual violence claims that immigration is an important factor in the increase in domestic violence in the last 15 years. According to the professor, his statement would "bring consequences and criticisms upon me," but he emphasizes that in half of domestic-violence killings, at least one of the parties is an immigrant. Much of the traffic in illegal drugs in Spain is controlled by immigrants. And immigrant groups, legal and illegal, are becoming bolder as they find legal-aid groups and other champions with political clout willing to stand up for them. In mid-April, mobs of immigrants attacked police commissaries in the Canary Islands, having previously invaded discos, beaten up their clientele, and started street fights. Police were injured in these attacks.

One should not, of course, promote xenophobia, but a nation has a right to decide precisely who its resident foreigners should be. Obviously, Spain's unending flood of illegal aliens must be stopped. Even land-locked Switzerland, whose illegal-alien problem is relatively small compared with that of Spain, France, and Britain, has taken some steps in that direction. On April 4, *MinutoDigital* reported the adoption of a new Swiss law stipulating that immigrants whose applications for residency have been rejected, and all other immigrants *sans-papiers*, will no longer be able to contract matrimony on Swiss territory, thereby removing one of the classic avenues through which illegal immigrants have become legal residents. Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero, on the other hand, and the Spanish Socialists in general, have responded very weakly, if at all, to this problem. A few years ago Zapatero legalized *en masse* hundreds of thousands of illegal aliens in Spain, provoking the anger of many in the European political class.

The Socialist government claims that 77 percent of all sexual violence is not reported. However, according to the Comité Organizador del XVII Congreso Nacional de Psiquiatría Legal (the Organizing Committee of the 17th National Congress on Legal Psychiatry), whose theme for this meeting was "Abuse, Psychiatry and the Law," 40 percent of all men accused of sexual violence turn out to be innocent because, among other reasons, women often abuse the law on the advice of their lawyers. A psychiatrist on this committee explained that in a significant number of cases, paranoid women report sexual violence and other forms of abuse, but these women themselves are guilty of these offenses against the men they accuse. This appraisal of the legal situation is supported in broad strokes by another distinguished member of the organization who asserts that some forms of

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sexual violence or spousal abuse are used as a "tool to win benefits" (once again following the advice of lawyers). For the record, Violeta, much vilified in the Spanish media for supposedly being one of those women who do not report such violence, cannot be classified as a "non-reporting female." She has declared frequently and publicly that she once had a boyfriend, a policeman, who beat her up, and that she *did* report him to the authorities; her advice to women is to turn in the man in question. She insists, however, that she was in no danger from Antonio on August 2, 2008. We will only know the complete story after the trial.

Minister Aído appears to have little in common with Jesús Neira since, as she was praising Neira to the high heavens, she was simultaneously promoting a new law that greatly expands access to abortion and defines 16-year-old girls as "adults" who do not need parental approval or even notification to have an abortion. In mid-April she roundly rebuked the Catholic Church for opposing the law, suggesting that the Church limit herself to preaching about sin. She further stated that she had assembled a team of experts for advice on this subject, who of course did not take "religious criteria into account." She then attacked all those opposed to her abortion law, saying that she wished people who were so ardent in the defense of the unborn would be as ardent in defending the rights of the already born. On April 24 Aído announced that the Socialist government is committed to fighting for equality for homosexuals, women, and others, *not only at home but abroad*. Addressing the Fifth Congress of the Federation of Lesbians, Gays and Transsexuals in Madrid, she boasted of Spain's diversity and paid respect to the rainbow flag fluttering above them. A fellow participant and well-known member of one of the most leftist political parties in Spain railed against the Catholic Church and other religious bodies for their attitudes toward homosexuals, asking the government to end all subsidies to these churches in order to "move forward in the values of freedom." Another politician attending the conference declared that "the Left has never been so united in its defense of diversity"; still, much more had to be done—for instance, the creation of a network of hospitals to perform sex-change operations. Spain is in an economic crisis so deep, with unemployment so high, that she could not possibly be the "happy" country Aído says she is. Yet money must be set aside for sex-change clinics.

The call for expanded abortion "rights," however, has not been echoed by everybody. Pro-life groups have been actively collecting signatures against this pending legislation. Their objective was to collect 112,138 signatures against the proposed law in one day, corresponding to the number of abortions carried out in Spain in one year. On the appointed day, however, gang violence broke out against these antiabortion groups. In one instance, six young goons attacked a group of antiabortion volunteers, after spray-painting over their placards. One unwary and unprepared male volunteer was assaulted by a woman who threw herself on him, knocking him to the ground, then kicked him and beat him in the face, producing multiple contusions. Another man who was signing the petition had his lip split by hoodlums. Two female volunteers of the D.A.V. (Derecho a Vivir—"Right to Live") were attacked, including a 60-year-old woman who was assaulted and thrown to the ground.

Reacting to these events in the spirit of Neira, a few employees of a nearby supermarket rushed to protect the victims. They were successful. Despite their efforts, however, Jaime Díaz, one of the volunteers, was hospitalized. Antonio Tostado, another volunteer, claimed that his organization would take legal action. Derecho a Vivir hopes that the police will act appropriately against the aggressors, whom the volunteers say they can easily identify.

I wonder how vigorous the authorities' response will be. After all, they are dealing with hoodlums who commit violence in support of a progressive agenda, and in Europe rather ineffective action, if any, is usually taken against these types of thugs. True, all the proper ingredients are in place—men beating up women, victims of violence rushed to the hospital—but these are the wrong women, and the victims are on the wrong side. These are antiprogressives, probably strong Christians, and thus the people most despised and feared by the left.

In September 2008, shortly after the beating of Neira, Spanish sources reported that a Rumanian immigrant was murdered in Spain, allegedly by her male Rumanian partner. In the same month as the Neira incident, a Brazilian immigrant in Spain killed his female partner, also a Brazilian, by beating her to death with bricks, or so police investigators claim. These are gruesome events and should have made the front page for months, but progressives are afraid that this type of coverage would "inflame passions" against immigrants and lead to xenophobia. The Neira/Violeta/Antonio case was safer: All three were white nonimmigrant Spaniards.

Predictably, Spain's left did not tolerate the country's love affair with Neira for long. A highly placed member of Spain's Federation of Lesbians, Gays and Transsexuals (FELGT), an influential constituency within the Socialist Party, expressed outrage at Neira's suggestion that young boys should be taught to treat young girls with deference. He is an old-fashioned *machista*, a male supremacist, says she, a "pre-fabricated hero," and an extreme rightist. She claims that Neira does not emphasize sexual equality. Now others on the Spanish left are joining the FELGT leader in denouncing Neira. One well-known left-leaning journalist has gone so far as to label him "antidemocratic." Dr. Neira has further infuriated left-of-center Spanish opinionmakers by calling U.S. President Barack Obama a wimp who has no knowledge of history. Needless to say, his opinion of Spanish Socialist Prime Minister Rodríguez Zapatero is far from favorable.

In the face of these charges, Neira's convictions remain unchanged. To his attackers, he responds, "They can say

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what they want, I am not going to pay attention to them."

So far the attacks on Neira from the left appear to have had scant effect on public opinion. Recently, viewers of a top-rated television program voted him the most popular Spaniard of the year, ahead of movie and soccer stars. His good friend Gonzalo Fernández de la Mora has told me that it is a gratifying experience to accompany Neira around Madrid: He is constantly approached by strangers who greet him and tell him how much they admire him.

Brooke Cadwallader, an American who is fluent in Spanish, wrote this while traveling in Luxemburg.

Letter From Greece

by Nikos Hidiroglou

A Modern Greek Tragedy

Greece is under the influence of an aggressive (and violent) left, which has made common cause with liberals in an attempt to eliminate every vestige of the Hellenism that is so deeply rooted in the psyche of the indigenous population. Of course, they call it political correctness and modernization.

Following the familiar pattern of the left in the United States and Western Europe, the Greek left's *modus operandi* includes a concerted effort to ply our children with the opiate of Marxism. They continually seek to alter the content of school textbooks, even in primary education, to promote a rationalist, multicultural, and secular approach to every subject, including our glorious history. Peoples who threaten our sovereignty, civilization, and national existence are portrayed as "friends" and "neighbors." Thus, such unpleasant "details" as the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974 are carefully concealed—or even blamed on the Greek nationalist right—while the heroic struggle against British colonial rule (including the EOKA's memorable stand in Cyprus) is portrayed as nationalistic, chauvinistic, and fascist. Today, Greeks are struggling to understand why our "friends" from the east occupy a large part of Cyprus, challenge our sovereignty in the Aegean Sea, and send us hundreds of illegal immigrants every day.

After the civil war (1946-49) the right-wing urban elites were only concerned with maintaining and perpetuating their privileges, so they did not bother to counter the leftist propaganda that started spreading through neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, and universities immediately after the conflict. At the time, these sectors of society were largely conservative, having suffered at the hands of communist guerillas who inflicted massacres on civilians, especially in the rural population. But when democracy was restored in 1974 and the Communist Party legalized, the universities quickly became left-wing strongholds and started producing the new elite.

Today, there is not a single editor-in-chief—even in what remains of the right-wing press—nor any television or radio executive who is not a leftist. The (mainly ex-) communists now control the Greek media, deciding which concerns ought to be raised and which should be concealed from the public. The concerns that are deemed worthy to address are presented from a singularly "progressive" and dogmatic point of view. Thus, the transformation of Greek society continues apace.

This troublesome milieu led to violence last December, when the killing of a student by police instigated widespread riots. Thousands of businesses in downtown Athens were destroyed. The extreme left orchestrated vandalism and looting, which in turn led to assassination attempts on policemen, two of whom were killed. All the while, journalists and anchormen acted as the media arm of the leftist agitators. This is nothing new: The Greek press has always been tolerant of (if not apologetic toward) terrorist activity. Left-wing newspapers are still happy to publish the proclamations of terrorist groups, and convicted terrorists have become columnists in mainstream papers.

During the last European parliamentary elections, the Greek people penalized the opportunists of the radical left, awarding it with only four percent of the vote. Still, the Communist Party garnered eight percent. And because this voting bloc of 12 percent controls most of the media, the task of convincing the citizens of Greece that the left is the problem, not the solution, remains difficult.

Fortunately, the left's hegemony over Greek culture may soon be ending. The European Commission is attempting to force Greece to grant state accreditation to private universities. Naturally, the left is doing everything in its power to stand in the way of this development. Given the current climate in European law and politics, their efforts are bound to fail. But when they do, Athens will once again pay the price. The left will rally and demonstrate—and more.

Nikos Hidiroglou writes for Metro, *a newspaper published in Athens.*

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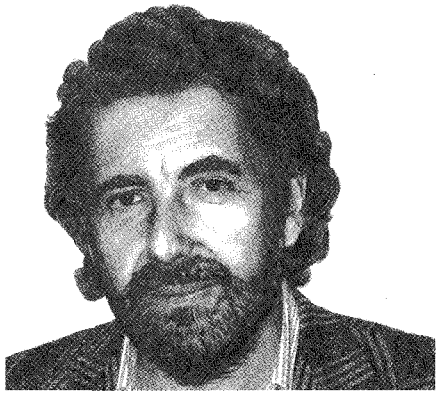
by Andrei Navrozov

The Salami Fallacy



A few months ago in this space I described the Pecorino Effect, referring not so much to the Italian cheese as to the shopper's inability to refuse any merchandise he has sampled, irrespective of what he thinks of the quality. I diagnosed this modern malady, with myself as a specimen of social tissue in the Petri dish of a farmers' market in Palermo, only to realize later that the disease was pandemic, for the incontrovertible reason that, in today's world, anything from political affiliations to lifestyle decisions qualifies as merchandise.

If the Pecorino Effect is the centripetal force of modern life, its antisocial, centrifugal complement is the Salami Fallacy. In this case I borrow the trope from the expression "salami tactics," which is what cunning tyrants use on bleating democracies to win strategic concessions and anecdotal wives use on husbands whose Budweiser habit they want to break.

The Salami Fallacy is the belief that the world as one knows it will go on forever, that the length of the sausage in question is a workable definition of infinity, and that the stealthy, incremental surrender of what once made life what it was is a matter of evolution, of one's changing location on the infinitely long cutting board of time. "Love is lost?" wonders a famous Russian gypsy romance of the 1900's, adding, with melancholy irony, "You can live without it!" Only, in the mental condition I am describing, irony does not enter into it.

No, modern man samples whatever he is offered by the merchandise mongers and buys into it straightaway, mindful that these purchases are bound to have a cumulative impact on culture and civilization, yet reassured by the thought of progress and evolution. The thought serves as a blanket indulgence and excuses him from the task of figuring out just what sort of impact is in the offing, positive or negative. After all, given eternity—which has been secretly wired into the dual notion of progress and evolution like a religiosity microchip—there is no such thing as a really negative impact.

We no longer strive for a paradise on earth, as my compatriots had been told they were doing when building communism; we no longer fear a hell on earth, which, as my compatriots discovered, was what they had been building; we have finally settled on the prospect of living in a purgatory on earth, where nothing matters because everything is reversible, negotiable, and adjustable. Love is lost? You will find it again, don't worry! And anyway, if you don't, you can always get yourself a silicone doll off the internet. Might even be better than the real thing.

The House of Lords is abolished in Britain to make way for an elected body of child molesters and petty thieves? We can live without it, and besides, maybe the people who get elected to the new senate will be very nice. Trident is scrapped to finance housing for indigent single mothers who drink to forget that their children sniff glue? We can live without it, because national sovereignty is an outdated geopolitical concept, nuclear submarines are useless thanks to the changed nature of the threat to free societies, everything is for the best in this best of all possible worlds, and single mothers, unlike Edmund Burke and all the other ghosts of the lost Atlantis that once was the British Empire, can vote. Atlantis is lost? Precisely. We've got on all right without it, haven't we? And anyway, there is always the Kirk Douglas movie.

In the main, modern ratiocination takes the Panglossian form of appeasement, which is salami tactics used on one's own conscience. It consists of suppressing questions of fact along with all possible answers, disturbing and, since eternity is at our disposal, unnecessary. In 1962, in a neglected work of genius entitled *The Triumph of Provocation*, now published in English for the first time, the Polish writer Józef Mackiewicz addressed a list of such questions to newly "de-Stalinized" Western intellectuals with sarcasm that Orwell might appreciate:

> 1. Was life in Russia before the revolution better or worse than life after the revolution? Since everything indicates that it was better, it was decided not to discuss this embarrassing question. 2. Is the Leninist model of the Bolshevik Revolution more closely related to Fascism than to the liberal "reactionariness" of the prerevolutionary era? Since everything indicates that there is a closer affinity between Communism and Fascism than between Communism and "reaction" of the old type, it was decided not to discuss this embarrassing question. 3. Is it possible to find any inherent differences between Stalinism and classic Leninism? Since everything indicates that no inherent differences can be found, but only differences in method, it has been decided not to discuss this embarrassing question.

I hope to be reviewing Mackiewicz's book, so for the moment I will only note my frustration at the discovery that the Salami Fallacy had been diagnosed by a Pole, and at a time when hell on earth must have seemed less of a foregone conclusion than it does today. At least the Pecorino Effect is still mine to gloat over.

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CHRISTIANITY

The Necessity of Christianity

by Tom Piatak

According to an increasingly popular and influential narrative, the Founding Fathers were mostly crypto-atheistic deists who, as Christopher Hitchens is fond of pointing out, did not mention God in the Constitution, and gave us a First Amendment because they were, at best, suspicious of Christianity and wished to limit its influence. And it's a good thing they did, because Christianity is a font of ignorance, violence, and superstition, mankind did not begin to achieve much of anything until we had thrown off most of its shackles, and once we throw off those that remain, we can look forward to greater levels of peace, freedom, and rationality. This narrative is believed by perhaps a majority of educated people in Europe and a growing number of educated people here, and can be found in the best-selling books of such "new atheists" as Hitchens (*god Is Not Great*), Richard Dawkins (*The God Delusion*), and Sam Harris (*Letter to a Christian Nation*).

This is pure nonsense. As Mel Bradford pointed out in *A Worthy Company*, the Framers of the Constitution were

> with no more than five exceptions (and perhaps no more than three) . . . orthodox members of one of the established Christian communions: approximately twenty-nine Anglicans, sixteen to eighteen Calvinists, two Methodists, two Lutherans, two Roman Catholics, one lapsed Quaker and sometime-Anglican, and one open Deist, Dr. Franklin, who attended every kind of Christian worship, called for public prayer, and contributed to all denominations.

What is more, "approximately thirty of the Philadelphia Framers were greatly involved with the growth and administration of their own particular denomination."

Nor was the purpose of the First Amendment to drive Christianity out of public life. Perhaps the most influential constitutional-law treatise before the Civil War was written by Joseph Story, a professor at Harvard and a member of the Supreme Court from 1811 to 1845. Here is what Story's *Commentaries on the Constitution of the United States* had to say about the First Amendment and the role of Christianity in American life:

> Probably at the time of the adoption of the Constitution, . . . the general if not the universal sentiment in America was, that Christianity ought to receive encouragement from the State so far as was not incompatible with the private rights of conscience and the freedom of religious worship. An attempt to level all religions, and to make it a matter of state policy to hold all in utter indifference, would have created universal disapprobation, if not universal indignation. . . .
>
> The real object of the [First Amendment] was not to countenance, much less to advance, Mahometanism, or Judaism, or infidelity, by prostrating Christianity; but to exclude all rivalry among Christian sects, and to prevent any national ecclesiastical establishment which should give to a hierarchy the exclusive patronage of the national government.

Indeed, the Framers saw religion as an indispensable part of the constitutional order, whose role was to foster the virtue necessary for republican government to work. As John Adams said, "The Constitution was written for a moral and religious people and is wholly unsuited for the governance of any other." And George Washington emphasized this theme in his Farewell Address:

> Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity . . . And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

Even Alexander Hamilton, Washington's most trusted aide, who helped him write the Farewell Address, opposed Jacobinism because he saw it as a threat to what he frankly termed "Christian civilization."

Perceptive foreign observers also have recognized the importance of Christianity to America. Alexis de Tocqueville noted that

> there is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America, and there can be no greater proof of its utility and its conformity to human nature than that

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its influence is profoundly felt over the most enlightened and free nation of the earth.

Indeed, Tocqueville recorded that the Catholic priests he spoke with in America were unanimous in their conclusion that America's absence of a national church was conducive to religious sentiment, not injurious to it. Tocqueville also echoed Washington and Adams in concluding that Christianity undergirded America's constitutional order:

> The imagination of the Americans, even in its greatest flights, is circumspect and undecided; its impulses are checked and its works unfinished. These habits of restraint recur in political society and are singularly favorable both to the tranquillity of the people and to the durability of the institutions they have established. Nature and circumstances have made the inhabitants of the United States bold, as is sufficiently attested by the enterprising spirit with which they seek for fortune. If the mind of the Americans were free from all hindrances, they would shortly become the most daring innovators and the most persistent disputants in the world. But the revolutionists of America are obliged to profess an ostensible respect for Christian morality and equity, which does not permit them to violate wantonly the laws that oppose their designs; nor would they find it easy to surmount the scruples of their partisans even if they were able to get over their own. Hitherto no one in the United States has dared to advance the maxim that everything is permissible for the interests of society, an impious adage which seems to have been invented in an age of freedom to shelter all future tyrants. Thus, while the law permits the Americans to do what they please, religion prevents them from conceiving, and forbids them to commit, what is rash or unjust.
>
> Religion in America takes no direct part in the government of society, but it must be regarded as the first of their political institutions; for if it does not impart a taste for freedom, it facilitates the use of it. Indeed, it is in this same point of view that the inhabitants of the United States themselves look upon religious belief. I do not know whether all Americans have a sincere faith in their religion—for who can search the human heart?—but I am certain that they hold it to be indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions. This opinion is not peculiar to a class of citizens or to a party, but it belongs to the whole nation and to every rank of society.

A century and a half after Tocqueville, the great Russian writer and prophet Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, in his address at Harvard, sought to remind Americans of what the Framers knew and what our intellectuals were even then busily trying to forget:

> However, in early democracies, as in American democracy at the time of its birth, all individual human rights were granted because man is God's creature. That is, freedom was given to the individual conditionally, in the assumption of his constant religious responsibility. Such was the heritage of the preceding thousand years. Two hundred or even fifty years ago, it would have seemed quite impossible, in America, that an individual could be granted boundless freedom simply for the satisfaction of his instincts or whims. Subsequently, however, all such limitations were discarded everywhere in the West; a total liberation occurred from the moral heritage of Christian centuries with their great reserves of mercy and sacrifice. State systems were becoming increasingly and totally materialistic. The West ended up by truly enforcing human rights, sometimes even excessively, but man's sense of responsibility to God and society grew dimmer and dimmer. In the past decades, the legalistically selfish aspect of Western approach and thinking has reached its final dimension and the world wound up in a harsh spiritual crisis and a political impasse. All the glorified technological achievements of Progress, including the conquest of outer space, do not redeem the twentieth century's moral poverty which no one could imagine even as late as in the nineteenth century.

Thus we come to the moral poverty of the early 21st century, when the educational and media establishments are increasingly devoted to subverting the truths recognized by Washington and Adams, Tocqueville and Solzhenitsyn. The new atheists and their followers take civilization and morality for granted, and expect both to be unaffected by the eclipse of Christianity they so fervently desire.

Last year, a biology professor at the University of Minnesota Morris, P.Z. Myers, attracted a fair bit of attention when he asked on his website,

> Can anyone out there score me some consecrated communion wafers? There's no way I can personally get them—my local churches have stakes prepared for me, I'm sure—but if any of you would be willing to do what it takes to get me some, or even one, and mail it to me, I'll show you sacrilege, gladly, and with much fanfare.

Myers proceeded to do just that. When a Catholic journalist asked him afterward whether Christianity had played a role in fostering Western civilization, Myers simply denied it: "No, people made those contributions to civilization," which is rather like say-

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ing Nazism cannot be held responsible for the holocaust, because "people" ran the death camps. In fact, crediting Christianity with a role in the achievements of Christendom is "like saying that because for so many years people got smallpox, smallpox is to be credited for all the virtue men have done." So much for the profoundly Christian imagination of Michelangelo and Giotto, Bach and Handel, not to mention the architects of Chartres and St. Peter's.

Another of the new atheists, *Guardian* columnist Polly Toynbee, displayed ignorance as breathtaking as Myers when she dismissed the notion that religion had anything to do with morality:

> Most insulting is the idea that morality comes from the rulebook of an external God: the Godless are without moral compass. Yet morality is plainly inborn in every child as soon as it cries "Unfair."

The fact that there is an innate sense of right and wrong does not mean that religion is unnecessary. (In fact, thinkers from Aquinas to C.S. Lewis have argued that the existence of such a "natural law" points to God.) The trick is how to get people to do what is right when it appears to be against their own interest to do so, or when no one is watching. The Framers thought that was the role played by Christianity; Polly Toynbee seems to think we can rely on the exclamations of toddlers to make sure men do what is right.

Neither Myers nor Toynbee is a marginal figure. Myers' blog was voted the best science blog on the web and is widely read, and Richard Dawkins came riding to Myers' defense when he was criticized for desecrating the Eucharist. Toynbee is a leading columnist in Britain's premier left-wing newspaper. But Toynbee lives in a country far more in line with her views than does Myers, and what is happening in that country today is a vindication of the wisdom of the Framers. According to polling data compiled by Steve Sailer at *VDare.com*, 84 percent of Americans believe Jesus was the Son of God, 70 percent believe in Hell, and nearly 45 percent of Americans attend church once per week. The comparable polling data for Britain shows that only 46 percent of her people believe Jesus was the Son of God, only 28 percent believe in Hell, and just 13 percent attend weekly services. More recent figures show that weekly attendance at religious services in Britain has fallen to under seven percent of the population, many of whom are recent immigrants.

One of the reasons for this is that many of the people Britain regards as her best thinkers are not merely nonbelievers but anti-Christian zealots who regularly attack Christianity as the embodiment of evil. *Prospect* voted Richard Dawkins, a man who authored a British television series arguing that religion was "the root of all evil," Britain's leading intellectual. The *Independent*'s Johann Hari called Dawkins' series "heroic" and argued that what Britain needs is more open hostility to religion:

> It is only as you watch the film that you realise how rare it is to hear clear arguments against organised superstition, even in this, the least religious country in the world. . . . Dawkins shows that our genuflection to superstition . . . is causing terrible problems.

Toynbee tells her readers that "religion is not nice, it kills: it is toxic in places where people really believe in it," and that, "When absolute God-given righteousness beckons, blood flows and women are in chains." And Hitchens senses that more and more are willing to denounce religion. When promoting *god is Not Great*, he told an interviewer on Irish radio, in reference to Mother Teresa, "I wish there was a hell for the bitch to go to." Later, he told *The Atlantic*, "You couldn't have said that a few years ago. You would have gotten a terrible pasting for it. But now, everybody knows it's true. They see through this stuff." British intellectuals who loudly proclaim that religion is "evil" are beginning to argue that people should be protected from exposure to such "evil," just as Dawkins likens religious education to child abuse; similarly, children's novelist Philip Pullman lobbied to prevent *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* from being made into a movie on the grounds that the book was "morally loathsome" and "a peevish blend of racist, misogynistic, and reactionary prejudice."

The effect of such thinking was foreseen long ago by Jonathan Swift, who recounted in his "Argument Against Abolishing Christianity" how a villager, after hearing an argument against the Trinity, "most logically concluded" that, "if it be as you say, I may safely whore and drink on, and defy the parson." And so do today's Englishmen, exhibiting levels of loutishness unseen among comparable populations in America.

On August 24, 2008, Sarah Lyall reported in the *New York Times* on the escapades of British tourists. Konstantinos Lagoudakis, the mayor of Malia, Greece, said of British visitors to his town that "They scream, they sing, they fall down, they take their clothes off, they cross-dress, they vomit. It is only the British people—not the Germans or the French." According to Lyall, a pair of drunken female British tourists returning to Manchester from Greece this summer, yelling, "I need some fresh air," attacked the flight attendants with a vodka bottle and tried to wrestle the airplane's emergency door open at 30,000 feet. On the Greek island of Zakinthos,

> where a teenager from Sheffield died after a drinking binge this summer, more than a dozen British women were charged in July with prostitution after taking part . . . in an alfresco oral sex contest.

Lyall also recounts how a 20-year-old British woman visiting Greece gave birth to a baby in a hotel room after a night of public drunkenness and was charged with infanticide after the baby died. And she reports on two Britons in Dubai who met during a drinking bout and "were arrested and charged with

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having sex on a beach, after repeatedly shouting abuse at a police officer who ordered them to stop." But the British tourists interviewed by Lyall saw nothing wrong. Chris Robinson, 21, in a succinct summary of post-Christian morality, defended British tourists in Greece: "I've never seen anyone get stabbed the whole time I've been here."

The moral collapse of post-Christian Britain is evident from statistics, as well as anecdotes. The illegitimacy rate among white Britons is 46 percent, double the rate among American whites, and the crime rate is 40-percent higher in Britain, even though minorities, who account for a disproportionately large number of crimes in America, are only one fourth as numerous in Great Britain as they are here. Steve Sailer has argued persuasively that "the most striking and important difference" between America's white working class and its far more troubled British counterpart is "the strength of Christianity here." This point was brought home by an article last year in the *City Journal*, in which Theodore Dalrymple focused on a recent UNICEF report that indicated "Britain is the worst country in the Western world in which to be a child." Among the statistics buttressing this conclusion were that

> British children have the earliest and highest consumption of cocaine of any young people in Europe, are ten times more likely to sniff solvents than are Greek children, and are six to seven times more likely to smoke pot than are Swedish children. Almost a third of British young people aged 11, 13, and 15 say they have been drunk at least twice.

Dalrymple traces the pathological condition of many of Britain's young people to "the nonjudgmental attitudes among elites," which, in turn, is merely a reflection of the collapse of traditional Christianity in Britain.

The de-Christianization of Britain is producing other problems. One is an appalling ignorance of Britain's cultural heritage: 43 percent of Britons could not identify what Easter celebrated and, according to Polly Toynbee, art galleries "now have to write the story of every religious painting on the label as people no longer know what 'agony in the garden,' 'deposition,' 'transfiguration,' or 'ascension' mean." Another problem is that the disappearance of Christianity does not mean the elimination of public morality, but its misdirection. In Britain's case, that misdirection takes the form of a bizarre desire to erase the nation's heritage and replace it with a bureaucratically mandated "multiculturalism." In July 2008, the British papers reported that a government-funded advisory group recommended disciplining toddlers for "racism" if they "react to a culinary tradition other than their own by saying 'yuk.'" The *Daily Mail* reported that the Institute for Public Policy Research, a leading Labour think tank, was advocating that Christmas be "downgraded." Such a downgrading would be part of an "urgent and upfront campaign" to promote a "multicultural understanding of Britishness." A reader from China wrote, "A sinking nation with no sense of national pride—glad I left." Nations that replace the true Faith with multiculturalism die, even as Britain is dying today. In 2006, 207,000 Britons emigrated, the highest number since before World War I, when Britons had a vast empire to emigrate to. And a BBC poll in 2006 showed that over half of Britons have considered emigrating in their lifetimes. We Americans, who owe so much to Britain and are more like the British than any other people in Europe, ignore at our peril the problems Britain is encountering from effectively abandoning Christianity and the rest of her heritage.

We need to remember, as our founders knew, that we are indeed part of what Hamilton termed "Christian civilization," and that what that civilization achieved was made possible by the beliefs that animated it. As Charles Murray, an agnostic, concluded after his exhaustive study of human accomplishment,

> it was the transmutation of [the classical] intellectual foundation by Christianity that gave modern Europe its impetus and that pushed European accomplishment so far ahead of all other cultures around the world.

We need to remember that, even today, Christianity is conducive to virtue. According to University of Virginia psychology professor Jonathan Haidt, an atheist, religious believers in the West are "happier, healthier, longer-lived, and more generous to charity and each other than are secular people." Indeed, a study by the Barna Group revealed that religious Americans give seven times as much to charity on a *per capita* basis as do non-religious Americans.

Above all, we need to remember, as Evelyn Waugh wrote, "It is no longer possible, as it was in the time of Gibbon, to accept the benefits of civilization and at the same time deny the supernatural basis on which it rests."

Contributing editor Tom Piatak writes from Cleveland, Ohio.

EDUCATION

Campus Rebellion

by Egon Richard Tausch

It's a story told regularly in the conservative media. A student pleads for advice: The professors at his college or university are left-wing, and he must choose between regurgitating the leftist propaganda in class discussions, term papers, exam answers, and essays for an A, or telling the truth for a low grade. What to do?

The reporter or journalist almost always responds that the student should say and submit (for four years!) whatever the professor wants and graduate to the real world with his honors degree. Such a course of action leads to self-deception and, gradually, sincere conversion—or to lying throughout one's postgraduate career. At minimum, it leaves less independent students in

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that class thinking that everything the professor teaches must be true, or someone would have spoken up. Many parents, if they knew all this, would bankrupt themselves to send their child to one of the handful of honest, scholarly, military or religious colleges and universities in America, or refuse to pay a cent for "higher education" and probably doom their child, however academically gifted, to a career in fast-food restaurants or garages, while the colleges swing further leftward.

I faced this same dilemma for many years, three postgraduate degrees and two successful careers ago. The choice was especially difficult for me because I had a double major: English and history, both playgrounds for the left. To make things more difficult I had little time to write in subtle double-meanings, because I worked my way through university with full-time jobs. Scholarships (outside of sports) were almost unheard of, and my boarding prep school had nearly bankrupted my parents. I did, however, find enough time (usually by sleeping during select classes) to found my university's first chapter of Young Americans for Freedom, which had about 200 nominal members, of which about 30 were very active. It was in self-defense, as the commons were ruled by the Trotskyite "Students for a Democratic Society." (So much for the myth that the left wasn't active on campuses until the late 60's.)

I quickly learned what my professors demanded and spewed it back. When I couldn't take it anymore, I began to learn tactics to pacify my conscience. In history, for example, the professor would assign a term paper requiring that we prove that the United States would be better under an extremely centralized "Hamiltonian" system but toward ridiculously "Jeffersonian" ends; "Interpret these Founders as we [I] did in class." I wrote a sophisticated paper according to the instructions, parroting my professor's lectures, while simultaneously writing a contrary thesis. I handed in only the former. Our grades were posted on the bulletin board after being turned in to the administration. I then visited the professor in his artfully book-strewn office and told him I had made a mistake, and could I please still turn in the paper that I actually wanted graded, handing him the one that truly reflected history. He told me that it was not possible to change my grade (the highest in the class) this late, but he would truly enjoy reading a paper of mine that I considered even better. The next I heard of the matter, he was fruitlessly begging the dean to let him flunk me. So I guess he read it. But all that was too much work for me, with minimal results.

After a few false starts I found a partial solution that will work from Yale to Podunk Junior College, so long as the school contains a committed leftist professor whose classes consist of his opinions and 30 or so students.

At our university I would get as many conservatives together as I could, usually many more than the average classroom would hold. We would wander into registration, held in the basketball gym, ahead of time. We would already have chosen the worst of the worst among the professors. We'd find the table with his course and its grad-student registrar, line up at it, and sign in until the class was overfull. It was delightful to see the smile on the professor's face if he happened to be in the building and looking at his table. So crowded, and by 9 A.M.!

Usually, the professor would begin with his inanities or lies at the class's first meeting. One or two of us would raise our hands, attempt to reason with him and, after failure, walk out. The next meeting went the same. Within a week or two the classroom was empty but for a bewildered professor. We still had time to add or drop courses, according to the rules. We dropped that course and added another if we hadn't already signed up for an extra, better course in advance.

I do not know what happened to the aged propagandists when they realized they had to teach to empty classrooms for a semester, and I don't really care. I do remember hearing that the worst one we targeted had begun teaching at what we considered a far lesser school. Of course, there were always other bad teachers, so compromise was necessary. But even limited trials provide self-respect. Every school has some sort of conservative club. If it can publish an alternative newspaper, the student right can certainly do what we did. If enough students followed our example, administrations would have to begin selecting their faculties more carefully, and tenure would be rarer. (Incidentally, one of my careers was as a professor, but I taught my most controversial courses honestly and fairly.)

The absence of student rebellions explains why we face today a population of "educated" men and women lacking principles and honor, with whom one cannot hold a reasonable conversation and not encounter attention deficit disorder, and who possess nothing that would pass in Europe as an education. In America they head up corporations, law firms, and hospitals; professional schools provide no escape. After 30 years practicing law in a large city I have not met a single attorney who admits to having read a book cover to cover since college—not even since law school, because cases are selected from "casebooks." Blackstone, Grotius, even Cicero or other writers touching on jurisprudence are unavailable and discouraged, as is questioning professors in class. I was forcibly reminded by the other students that they go to get a piece of paper, not to learn law. Other "learned" boot camps are the same.

Students who conform for a grade should keep in mind that lip service is often the most valuable service one can provide, and stifling what one knows to be the truth only gives one four full years of practicing deceit for selfish reasons. There is a rule that the Soviet Union as well as the United States had to learn: Moles often turn, intentionally or not. Over the years I have run into several conservative classmates for whom I once had great hope, but who had preferred to knuckle under "just for awhile." Years later, they had become brainless sycophants.

Egon Richard Tausch is an attorney in San Antonio, Texas.

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CONSERVATISM

Substandard: The End of an Illusion

by Thomas Fleming

The sale of *The Weekly Standard* should put paid to any lingering illusion that the neoconservative empire was anything but a Potemkin village. Allegedly, Rupert Murdoch sold the magazine for one million dollars to Philip Anschutz, the billionaire owner of Clarity Media Group, but the price seems either much too high or much too low. Too high, because only a fool would pay so much money for a property that does nothing but lose money without adding a glimmer of insight to political discussion. Too low, because if *The Weekly Standard* actually did enjoy the influence that its editors have been so loudly and insistently claiming, $50 million would not be nearly enough. For Anschutz, a million is the equivalent of the buck it takes to seal a contract. It's a rich man's walking-around money—in other words, chump change. If you were to believe the neoconservatives, *The Weekly Standard* has been the brains of the American Empire, but it went on the block for a lousy million. Some brains! Some empire!

Murdoch sank untold millions of his ill-gotten gains into TWS. I suppose that is the proper shorthand, since "The Standard" properly means the *Evening Standard*. (It's funny that, for all its supposed influence, the magazine does not have a well-known acronym or nickname.) Not long ago they were claiming a "growing circulation" of 60,000, and that may well be the case—though no one should ever accept anything an editor says about circulation. In misleading advertising lingo that publishers love to use, TWS snookers would-be advertisers with this classic canard: "More than 65,000 politically active Americans nationwide receive the magazine each week." Note the key word *receive*, as opposed to *subscribe to* or *pay for*.

I once told Pat Buchanan that Bill Kristol had declared him politically dead in the pages of TWS. "That guy," Pat snorted, "he never gets anything right." Unlike the stopped clock that is correct twice a day, *The Weekly Standard*'s editors have never got anything right, from weapons of mass destruction to the presidential aspirations of Steve Forbes to "John McCain's Moment," which Bill Kristol was proclaiming last September. TWS has never contributed anything to American political commentary. When they are right, it is because they are saying what everyone else has been saying, and, when they are original or distinctive, they are wrong.

But, as the Frum person declared in a postmortem interview, TWS has influence. Does it really? Is it influence to run after a parade, shouting, "Me too, me too!" and then claim not only to lead the parade but to have started it? It would not be so bad if their platitudinous conventional wisdom were at least some form of knee-jerk conservatism or capitalist greed, but it is neither. Bill's father, Irving (popularly known as "the godfather"), was famous for giving "two cheers for capitalism." (They can't even be clever without imitating someone—in this case E.M. Forster.) But Irving's politics have only evolved from his original Trotskyism to a cross between Swedish socialism and Taiwan's state capitalism. Fred Barnes unwittingly spilled the beans, as he so often does, when he called for big-government conservatism. Fred was not sufficiently acute to realize that he was uttering a contradiction in terms, and *The Weekly Standard*'s ideology is, at best, *New Republic* lite—an insipid brew that neither cheers nor inebriates.

TWS's not-so-secret weapon was neither its ideology nor its "writers," but Murdoch himself. It's like the old Henny Youngman joke about the man who crossed a lion with a parrot.

"What does he say?"

"I don't know, but when he talks I listen."

Not only is Murdoch a very powerful man, whose whims have to be catered to, but he also owns major newspapers and two television networks. Who would listen to TWS's platitudes—as poorly expressed as they are predictable—if the editors were not trotted out to tell their lies on FOX News?

The Weekly Standard did only two things. On the positive side, it provided a living for writers who cannot write and intellectuals who do not think, but it also contributed to the senile dementia that has afflicted the conservative mind since the election of Ronald Reagan. Bill Kristol did not destroy conservatism all by himself. His father was a much more destructive force, but it would be a grave mistake to attribute too much blame to the Kristols and Podhoretzes. They were welcomed with open arms by the unprincipled leadership of the conservative movement. Generally, parasites do not destroy a healthy organism. Of course, there were still good people working for Heritage in the 1980's and writing for *National Review*, but the lightning success of the neoconservative *putsch* was as revealing as Hitler's Anschluss (the annexation of Austria that met with so little resistance).

No one knows, exactly, what Philip Anschutz (no. 89 on the *Forbes* list of the richest people in the universe) will decide to do with *The Weekly Standard*, but whatever happens, he has already done us a big favor in revealing the low, low price of the emperor's new clothes. Ever since Obama's election, the conservative chatter has been all about new ideas and new strategies, but the very fact that they are saying this shows how bankrupt the conservatives really are. With this set of rookies heading for the showers, perhaps a few remaining veterans might come out of hiding and show us some of the stuff they had when they won the pennant in 1980. Perhaps, but probably not.

Thomas Fleming is the editor of Chronicles.

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State Nullification, Secession, and the Human Scale of Political Order

February 4-7, 2010 • Charleston, South Carolina

James Madison, "the father of the Constitution," taught that, being a sovereign political society, an American State has a "duty" to its citizens to block acts of the central government judged to be unconstitutional. Jefferson introduced the term *nullification* to describe this act and argued further that a State could lawfully secede from the Union.

Over the last century, by incremental steps, the central government has broken free of what Jefferson called "the chains of the Constitution." Many Americans are reluctantly coming to the conclusion that the central government will not reform itself and perhaps (like an ever-growing cancer), is incapable of doing so. Neither national political party is disposed to challenge the never-ending consolidation of power to the center; neither party, for instance, has asked whether Congress has any constitutional authority at all to enact a nationalized healthcare plan.

If some semblance of constitutional government is to be restored, change must come from the States themselves, acting in their sovereign capacity to protect their citizens from runaway centralization. For the first time in over 140 years the doctrines of State nullification and secession have once again entered public discourse. The aim of the conference is to recover an understanding of this neglected (Madisonian and Jeffersonian) part of our tradition and to explore its intimations for today.

TOPICS

• How did the central government, to which were delegated only enumerated powers, become the greatest concentration of financial and military power in history?

• Are State nullification and secession constitutional?

• Fifteen states peacefully seceded from the Soviet Union ("the evil empire"). How did they do it?

• Learn about the Second Vermont Republic, a serious secession movement in Vermont, and why thinkers as diverse as George Kennan, John Kenneth Galbraith, and Walter Williams have supported it.

• Is Aristotle right that there is a human scale to political order, as there is to all other things? If so, how big is too big?

SPEAKERS

Kent Masterson Brown • Marshall DeRosa • Thomas DiLorenzo • Peter Jones • Yuri Maltsev • Donald Livingston • Thomas Naylor • Larry Reed • Kirkpatrick Sale • Clyde Wilson

For more information, see the ad in next month's issue of Chronicles.

The Abbeville Institute • 478 Burlington Rd., Atlanta, GA 30307 • (404) 377-0484
abbevilleinst@bellsouth.net • *www.abbevilleinstitute.org*

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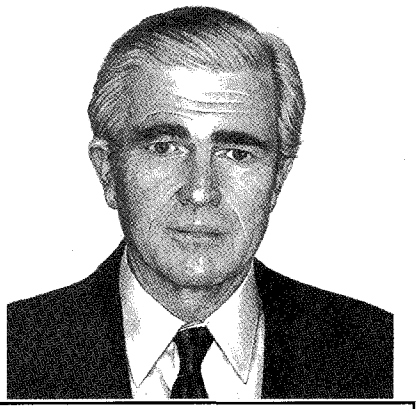
by George McCartney

Aliens and Knaves



District 9

Produced by Key Creatives and WingNut Films
Directed and written by Neill Blomkamp
Distributed by Sony Pictures

Forty-five years ago, radio humorist Jean Shepherd wondered why filmmakers invariably portrayed alien invaders as intellectually light years ahead of human beings. Wasn't it possible, he mused, that extraterrestrials might be a tad slow on the uptake, perhaps even slovenly of habit?

At 30, director Neill Blomkamp seems far too young to be familiar with Shepherd, but his first feature film, the alien-invasion opus *District 9*, nevertheless honors Shepherd's notion. Blomkamp's aliens are an entirely hapless lot. They unaccountably park their saucer-shaped ship over Johannesburg, South Africa, a choice that makes no sense at all. Everyone knows alien invasions begin over New York or Washington, D.C., or, when the Alpha Centaurians take a wrong turn, London. It stands to reason that, if you were from somewhere north of the Eagle Nebula, you would have to be a complete dunce to hover over Johannesburg unless, of course, the director telling your story grew up in this city and wanted to put across a glancing allegory about what he had witnessed there as a child before his parents fled to Canada to escape the turmoil and crime that engulfed South Africa during the years before and after the African National Congress gained power in 1994.

Upon their initial arrival in 1982, the aliens had refused to emerge from their vehicle. After three months, an exasperated South African government sent up some reconnaissance helicopters to find out what these reluctant visitors wanted. In a swift montage of simulated television-news commentary intercut with faux newsreel footage, we learn that the ship harbored confused, starving aliens. Taking pity on them, the government moved them into a camp, which quickly became a tin-hut shanty enclave similar to the Soweto District in Johannesburg, notorious for its squalor and petty crime. The aliens are seven-foot tall bipeds encased in exoskeletons, equipped with antennae along with other inscrutably disturbing appendages, capable of leaping fifteen feet off the ground from a standstill, and in possession of ray rifles that instantly splatter their targets into gobs of watery gelatin. Yet, despite these physical and technological advantages, they are so lacking in tactical wherewithal that they have allowed mere humans to keep them corralled in their garbage-strewn district.

Twenty-eight years later, the South African citizenry have long lost their pity and awe for these creatures and now refer to them dismissively as "prawns." And, it must be said, the prawns have more than earned the contempt heaped on them. They have become addicted to cat food supplied to them by a Nigerian warlord who barters tabby treats for their formidable weapons. Meanwhile, the respectable citizens increasingly complain of the prawns' disgusting ways. They are inveterate dumpster divers; what's more, they patronize Nigerian prostitutes who, for the right price, have overcome whatever natural reluctance they might once have had to engage in interspecies sex. Furthermore, the prawns have been known to mug the young, both black and white, for their Nikes—which is odd, since they walk in an ostrich-like toes-up gait quite unknown to Nike's market researchers.

Here as elsewhere, the needs of Blomkamp's allegory trump narrative plausibility. Oddities keep cropping up. The alien ship transported what must have been a million prawns, since their numbers have grown to 1.8 million post-arrival, and yet the vehicle is clearly no larger than the new 52,000-seat Yankee Stadium. Of course, there's standing room to consider, but still.

Despite its inconsistencies, *District 9* has become the critical darling of our mainstream press. Why? Well, it seems to align with our politically correct thinking on racism and immigration, issues before which the considerations of simple storytelling must fall by the wayside.

When the script gets down to serious business, it becomes difficult to know whether to laugh or groan. Since the South Africans want the prawns to disappear, the government hires a private contractor, the Halliburton-like Multi-National United (MNU), to relocate them 200 miles outside of Johannesburg, an initiative meant to parallel the infamous forced removal of blacks, coloreds, Asians, Indians, and some doubtful whites from Cape Town's Sixth Municipal District in 1968 on the grounds that it was a slum and conducive to interracial strife. To manage the fictional eviction, the head of MNU chooses his son-in-law, the stunningly inept Wikus (Sharlto Copley, giving a weirdly unaffected performance), a natural patsy wholly unsuited to the task. We watch in horrified amusement as he walks through the prawn ghetto, eviction notices in hand. At his side are armed mercenaries and, of course, a team of slavering television commentators hoping to film scenes embarrassing to the government. The journalists

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are not disappointed. Whenever Wikus meets with alien resistance, however mild, MNU's thugs step in. Ignoring Wikus's pleas for moderation, they beat and even kill several of the aliens. Ever the bureaucrat, Wikus tries to put the best face on the proceedings. The prawns don't understand private property, he hopelessly observes. Discovering a shack harboring dozens of incubating alien eggs, he looks on while the soldiers burn the structure. The eggs make a funny popping sound during their incineration, he needlessly adds by way of supplementing the all-too-gruesome soundtrack. A satire on modern abortion policy, perhaps?

Then the film shifts into a different register. Leaving behind the faux television-news reportage, Blomkamp focuses on Wikus, who slowly emerges as a recognizable individual forced from his bureaucratically scripted role by the necessity to make moral decisions on his own. As a bureaucrat trying to save his job, he had relied on an embarrassed smile and a nervous giggle. This simply won't do for the horror he's beholding. Finally, circumstances force him to identify with the aliens. He begins to see them as victims rather than a political nuisance. Furthermore, he discovers that MNU's real goal is to learn how to use the aliens' advanced weapons, which will only fire for those having some sort of biological connection to them. Here Wikus becomes vital to MNU's plans. His growing closeness to the aliens enables him to use these weapons. He's hustled into a laboratory to shoot some captured prawns. But Wikus flees and joins forces with the one alien smart and individual enough to have questioned his authority earlier. From this point the film continues in a predictable manner, even resorting to shoot-'em-ups in which Wikus gets to use a mechanical suit *à la* Iron Man to defend himself against MNU's evil minions.

As narrative, *District 9* is an odd reworking of standard sci-fi gimmicks enhanced with flashes of unexpected humor. The aliens' cat-food addiction is a priceless conceit, and there is the comic aptness of calling these scavenging creatures from space prawns, the ocean's garbage patrol.

All this is amusing enough, but it's Blomkamp's allegory that has the critics abuzz. Most assume the film is a morally serious meditation on the horrors of apartheid, with the aliens standing for South Africa's majority black populace oppressed by the white minority. At first glance, this would seem an obvious reading of the film. As it turns out, however, it's a myopically American interpretation. Blomkamp was, and in some ways still is, South African. In interviews, he has repeatedly denied the apartheid interpretation, and I am persuaded that he is not being disingenuous. His film portrays South Africa's black and mixed-race populations to be at one with the white in their joint hatred of the aliens. Additionally, there are the Nigerian gangsters who exploit the creatures from space and even cannibalize them, hoping to acquire their strength and, more importantly, their ability to use those DNA-activated weapons. Not since the 1960's, when *The New Yorker* and *Playboy* still ran cartoons featuring missionaries being boiled alive as gleeful Africans danced around them, has it been permissible to discuss African cannibalism.

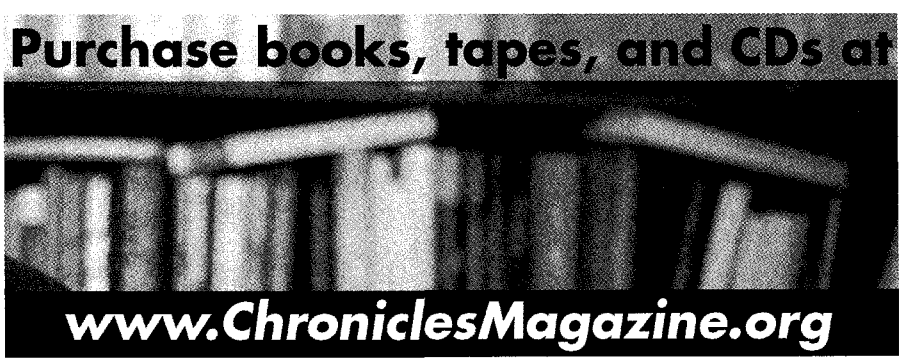
Blomkamp is obsessed with conditions in today's Johannesburg. He has said that within the next few decades the entire world will look like his former home city. He seems to mean that the racial, nationalist, and ethnic strife there will become the norm everywhere. There will no longer be oppressor and oppressed. Instead, we shall have the war of all against all. This is what he sees in the violent reaction of South African blacks to the massive emigration of Zimbabweans to their country. By and large, they have not been moved by the fact that these people have fled the horrors Robert Mugabe has inflicted on them. In Blomkamp's own words:

> When we started filming the movie, we had this terrible situation where we woke up one morning to find out that Johannesburg was eating itself alive. Impoverished South Africans had started murdering impoverished Zimbabweans, necklacing them and burning them and chopping them up. That's a very serious piece of contemporary South African society that also finds its way into the film: some impoverished citizens wanting other impoverished citizens out.

It seems that whites do not have a monopoly on intolerance.

Another dimension to *District 9* has to do with the aliens' apparent dimness. Although it's not addressed directly in the film, Blomkamp has said that he imagined them to be members of a hive culture who have lost their queen bee. As a result they are unable to organize themselves or take initiative on their own. This explains why they alternate between passivity and random violence. Sound familiar? It's all too analogous to our societies, in which the poor and uneducated react rather than plan, shout rather than reason, and thus make up a population easily led by the clever and unscrupulous few.

Blomkamp's film couldn't be more pessimistic about our immediate future, which makes its popularity exceedingly mysterious. ©



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by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

The Democratic Religion

A half-century ago, a politically ambitious intellectual celebrity named Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., defined liberalism's role as that of offering solutions to problems and solving them. Even in the heyday of the Vital Center, that was far from a complete representation of liberalism's self-perceived task. Today, when "advanced liberalism" (the phrase is James Kalb's) is rampant in the Western world and elsewhere, it is positively a ludicrous one. Modern liberals do not wish simply to tinker with the world their ideological forebears created; they are determined to transform that world, and reality itself. Even in day-to-day liberal politics, the idea of business as usual is unheard of. All new liberal governments, including the so-called conservative ones, feel duty-bound to offer new promises at the start—"change we can believe in." These promises are usually dramatic ones, as radical as the market will bear: concluding a war of several years' duration with the stroke of a pen and bringing the troops home within months, reinventing Social Security and healthcare, calling Wall Street to heel, and so forth. Underlying these fairly quotidian changes, however, is an agenda of millennial proportions.

Over the past two centuries, liberalism has moved far, far beyond the traditional understanding that government ought to reflect the structure and makeup of a society and its institutions. Today, liberals accept as axiomatic the idea that the role of government is to transform these things. Chesterton was objecting to this view when he referred to the obligation the living owe to the vast constituency of the dead in their countless generations. But there is, in addition to the deceased and "those who happen merely to be walking around," a constituency of the future that also deserves consideration. Liberal and "conservative" politicians alike will evoke, when it suits them, generations of unborn citizens—"our children and grandchildren"—who stand to be saddled with a crushing financial obligation if the national debt is not paid down. But the liberal project to reconstruct humanity and transcend history entails legacies far more serious than indebtedness. If liberalism has its way, a mere three or four generations at the helm of "proactive" government (some officeholders by election, the vast majority by appointment) will have succeeded in transforming America and the world, in their broadest features and most minute details. Human life and society, at the national and international level, will have been taken apart and reassembled according to radically new patterns—or, rather, a single universal pattern. Nations will have been divested of their traditional structures and institutions, and of their characters. So will peoples, and families. The human intellect and sensibility will have been reconfigured, and morality tortured to fit the needs of a totally rationalized secular liberal world. Religion will have been driven back to the catacombs, or conformed to New Age ethical pieties. Our descendants will have inherited a hideously deformed world—a botched abortion of a world—created by human beings driven by the satanic and inhuman ambition to transcend humanity.

What would a religion in which liberal skeptics could believe look like? James Kalb and J. Budziszewski, in two first-rate new books—*The Tyranny of Liberalism* (ISI) and *The Line Through the Heart: Natural Law as Fact, Theory, and Sign of Contradiction* (ISI), respectively—think it would look exactly like liberalism itself. Indeed, they argue, liberalism is a religion, though unconfessed as such by liberals. "It is in the nature of religions," Budziszewski suggests,

> to propose certain commitments as supreme and unconditional. Whatever proposes such commitments is (in the relevant sense) a religion. The sole fact that liberalism is against what it recognizes as religious need not prevent it from being a religion—provided that it does not perceive what it is.

That is sensible. It takes religion to recognize religion, and liberalism, which despises religion and the religious impulse, is the greatest enemy religion has today, or ever has had. In Kalb's estimation, the new religion, "a system of moral absolutes based on a denial that moral truth is knowable, consists in nothing less than the deification of man." It is, then, not simply a religion but a patently false religion, with liberal man as its idol. This calls into question the nature of another contemporary idol, often equated or conflated with liberalism—democracy. "I am an idolater of democracy," Norman Podhoretz, one of the high priests of Global Democracy, boasted 20 years or more ago.

Are liberalism and democracy one and the same thing? The current consensus seems to be that they are today but were not always, as classical liberalism evolved toward the advanced liberalism of the present. Let us assume that, in the postmodern context at least, democracy equals liberalism. But, if Kalb and Budziszewski are correct, liberalism is a religion. Thus we are left with the logical conclusion that democracy is a religion. That is a hard saying for our relentlessly secular era. But isn't it a true one?

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Orestes Brownson argued that the U.S. Constitution, by placing all the numerous Protestant sects on the same level of acceptance and respect, encouraged indifference on the part of Americans to all of them, and that the American people have thus tended to set politics above religion in their public and private lives. Brownson was writing in 1856. The War Between the States came five years after, and the defeat of the Confederacy was followed by the meteoric rise of an aggressive democratic nationalism unmatched in Europe before the Great War, accompanied by a decline, among the upper classes especially, of orthodox Christian belief. In the United States, democratism as progressive ideology ruled for generations before evolving into an evangelical religion in the 1980's, when Washington's interventionist tendencies developed into an aggressive globalist imperialism that fits nicely with the ruling elite's multicultural agenda at home, as the congruence of American foreign and immigration policies demonstrates. While the American public, after a flurry of patriotic show and support, has been quickly disillusioned by its leaders' serial military adventures overseas, it holds to the unshakable conviction that the United States is the Land of the Free, the best and greatest country on earth—still God's Country, now as in the past—and that democracy has made it so.

What no one considers is whether freedom and democracy are one and the same thing, as democracy and liberalism are thought to be.

Before the passage of the First Reform Act in 1832, Great Britain was a free country, a country of laws and of the rights of freeborn Englishmen—freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press (qualified), the right to private property, the principle that a man's home is his castle, the right to be judged by a jury of one's peers, *habeas corpus*, and so forth. But was she a democracy? Of course not. She was a constitutional monarchy, undergirded by a titled and landed aristocracy. Suffrage was in those days restricted to the wealthy and the upper-middle classes, the electorate miniscule compared with that of the present day. Does it follow that Great Britain was therefore a less "free" country than the United States, though patently less democratic? As for today, is John Bull, who has enjoyed the right to vote for more than a century but cannot, in the era of advanced liberalism, speak his mind in public on Islam or immigration without the threat of a jail sentence, and who is a helpless subject of confiscatory tax rates and the British national healthcare system, a freer man than his 19th-century ancestor before the reform?

There is a marvelous volume, out last year, called *The Discovery of France*, by Graham Robb, an English scholar and biographer whose subjects are French literature and history. Robb describes with great skill and a poet's instinct and literary art the consolidation of France—politically, administratively, culturally, linguistically, and geographically—between 1789 and World War I. This process was the agenda of liberalism, of the French Republic, of the French national state. Mr. Robb's narrative describes a feudal society pushed toward democracy or, at least, modernity, a traditional world being transformed into a rationalist bureaucratic one. Tocqueville would have admired this book, but he would have been appalled to learn how closely his direst prophecies regarding the centralizing French state have been realized. Though Robb is too much an artist to frame it in crass sociopolitical terms, his story is that of the liberation of a people—actually, a congeries of peoples collectively but inaccurately called "the French"—from the legal, social, and geographical restraints of past millennia. It is the story of millions of people attaining "freedom." But—freedom from what? That is the question that modern democratic people never ask, because it does not occur to them to do so. Freedom from your family? Freedom from your town, and from your land? From your *pays*, and from your province? Freedom from your parish church, and from your guild? Freedom from rural peace and the strangling reach of cities? Freedom from a limited yet healthy diet? Freedom from the habits and manners—the *moeurs*—of your ancestors? And, above all, freedom *into* what—the modern bureaucratized behemoth that demands (as Kalb says) "a particular human type" for its own success, and for the individual contentment of its citizens? Modern democracy is a hard bargain involving terrible concessions, not a certificate of unconditional liberation unqualified by blocks of fine print. And democracy, as a religion, is a bargain offered by the Devil, and the Devil could not—even if he wished to, which he doesn't—grant us freedom of any sort; any sort, that is, that counts, or is real rather than illusory.

If democracy is a religion, then it must be a false religion, a tissue of errors and misconceptions, misrepresentations and lies, bungled logic and historical ignorance, coupled with ignorance of the human heart. How could the Good Society be built on such a foundation? And even if it were possible to do so, how could such a society possibly sustain itself in the long run?

Modern democracy is what anthropologists call culture-specific, a product of the civilization a portion of whose historic ideals it partially reflects and in the context of which it matured. Democracy's fatal tendency is to undermine and finally destroy the civilization that invented democracy, by discouraging civilized values and encouraging uncivilized ones, as the iron logic of liberalism demands. In the 1920's and 30's, Pitirim Sorokin recognized that what he called the sensate culture goes through the motions of creating great works of art and of the intellect characteristic of the West's ideational and idealistic ages, while producing only commercialized and ideologized travesties of them. Liberalism, James Kalb asserts, kills thought. That is far from being all that it kills. Can parricide democracy destroy the father that gave it life, and survive the deed? That is the paramount question for the 21st century, and the postmodern age.

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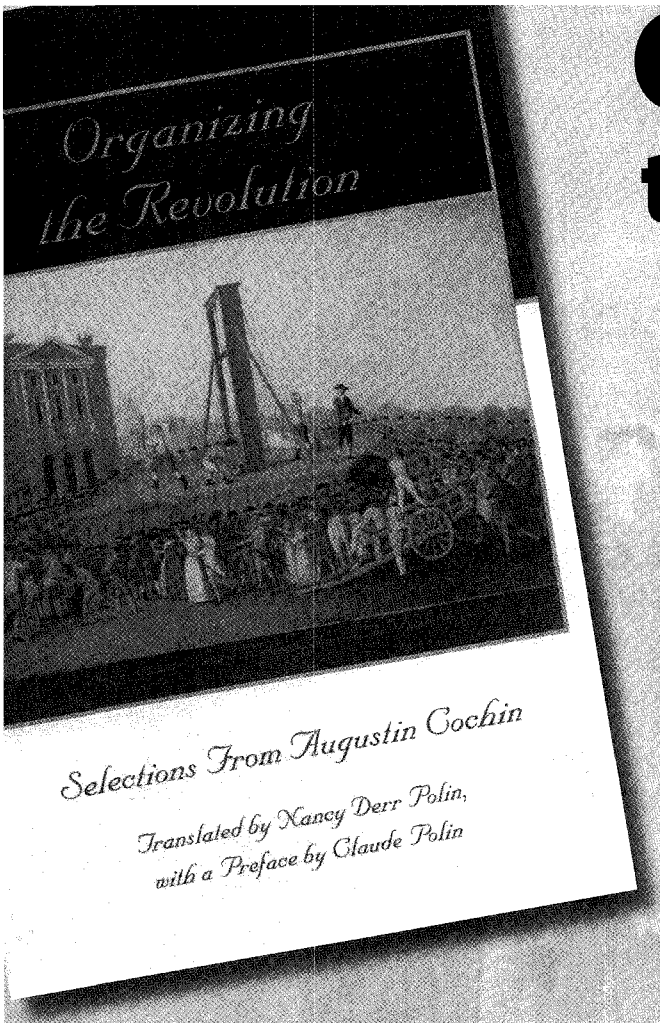
Organizing the Revolution
Selections From Augustin Cochin
Translated by Nancy Derr Polin,
with a Preface by Claude Polin

Organizing the Revolution

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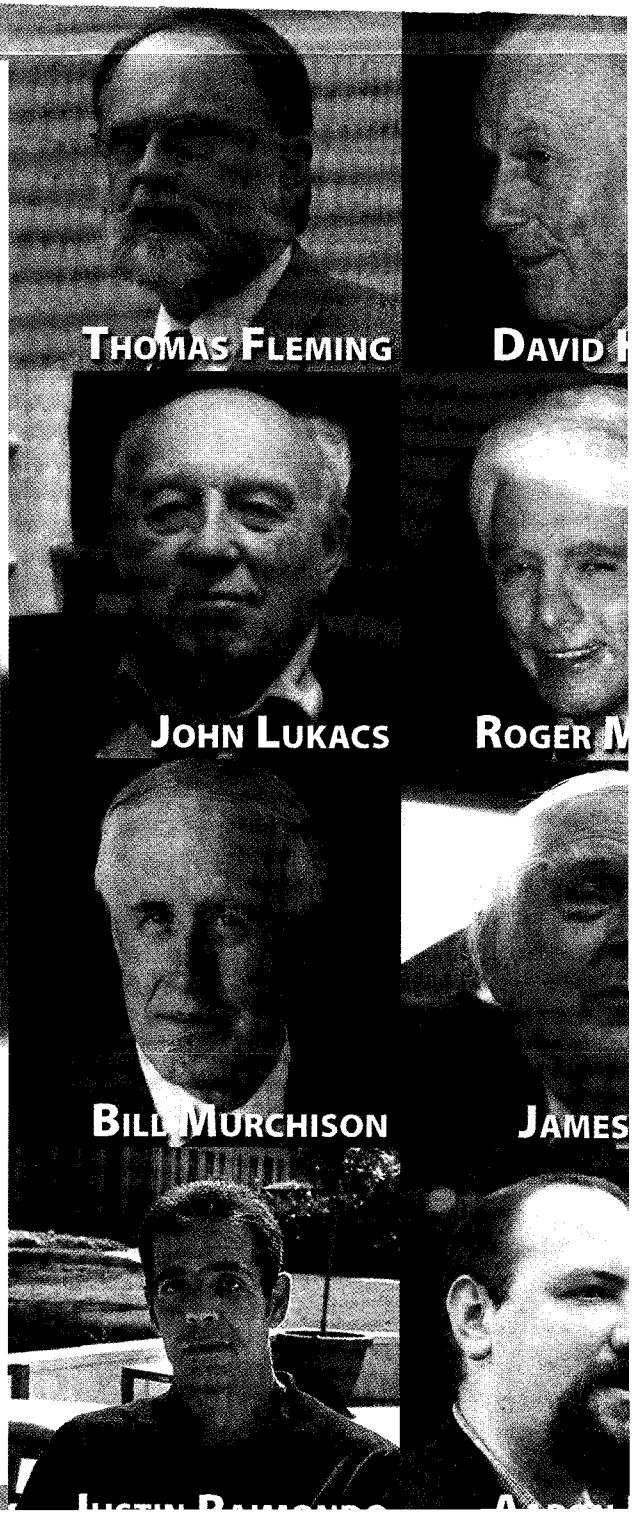

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